Commentary
January 2008

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Books in Review
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Yuval Levin • Gabriel Schoenfeld

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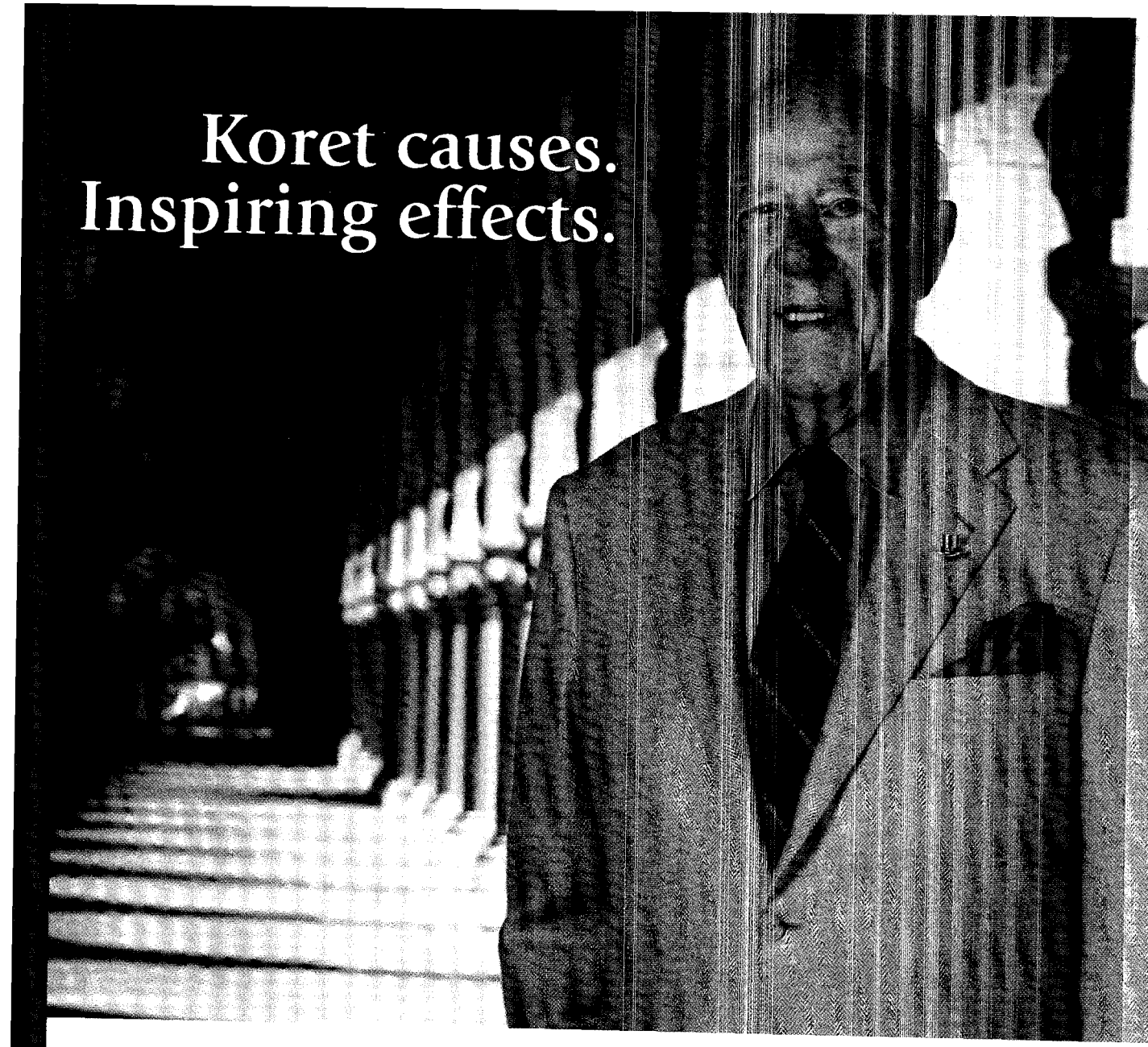

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ARTICLES

13
The Peace Planners Strike Again *Hillel Halkin*
There are good grounds for hoping that the experiment revived at Annapolis will fail.

19
Stem Cells and the President—An Inside Account *Jay P. Lefkowitz*
How a decision that pleased no one was reached, and why it was right, and what it means.

25
Is India an Ally? *Sadanand Dhume*
The new friendship between the U.S. and the world's largest democracy is remarkable and welcome; here are reasons for caution.

31
After the Art Wars *Michael J. Lewis*
The National Endowment for the Arts has learned the lessons of the tumultuous 80's—at great cost.

37
How Not to Remember & How Not to Forget *Ruth R. Wisse*
A Montreal childhood inscribed a permanently useful approach to memorializing the Jewish past and assuring the Jewish future.

OBSERVATIONS

45
Goethe's Magnificent Self *Algis Valiunas*
He was a man of unparalleled accomplishment, but to what end?

MUSIC

50
Hitler's Accompanists *Terry Teachout*
By harnessing classical music to political ends, the Third Reich reduced German cultural dominance to ashes.

LETTERS

3
What next for the neoconservatives; celibacy; Ralph Ellison; etc.

BOOKS

53 Heroic Conservatism by Michael J. Gerson *John Podhoretz*

57 Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur *William Kolbrener*

60 Cool It by Bjorn Lomborg *Jonathan Kay*

66 Godly Republic by John J. DiIulio, Jr. *Yuval Levin*

70 Surrender Is Not an Option by John Bolton *Gabriel Schoenfeld*

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Commentary
January 2008

Letters from Readers

Neoconservatism Now

To the Editor:

In "The Past, Present, and Future of Neoconservatism" [October 2007], Joshua Muravchik concludes that if you favor a forward, aggressive strategy to combat Islamist terrorism, neoconservatism is "the only game in town." This puts me in mind of André Gide's famous response when asked who was France's greatest poet. "Victor Hugo, alas," he replied.

Mr. Muravchik enumerates the facts that, as he rightly says, require an aggressive anti-terror policy: the 9/11 attacks; the *USS Cole* bombing; the African-embassy bombings; the Dharan-barracks bombing; and, most "frightening" of all, the masses of young Muslims motivated and trained to commit terrorist acts. But when it comes to identifying who has recruited, financed, legitimated, and indispensably supported this catalog of horrors, he goes vague and fuzzy: a "larger network," with "considerable resources," having "the support or complicity of several [unnamed] governments."

Why cannot he—or, by extension, the neoconservatives he speaks for—state the simple truth: that virtually every entry in his catalog of evil can be traced to a single predominant source: namely, the political, financial, and religious leadership of Saudi Arabia? It is the Saudis, from their king and clerical leadership on down, who have spent the last 30 years spreading a deeply seductive Wahhabist justification for anti-Western violence, religious warfare, and murderous anti-Semitism. It is wealthy Saudis who, six years after 9/11, so dominate the financing of al Qaeda that Stuart Levey, Undersecretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, commented recently: "If I could somehow snap my fingers and cut off the funding [of al Qaeda] from one country, it would be Saudi Arabia."

Nor are their activities limited to financial support. As reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, Saudi Arabia provides far and away the largest complement of the group usually described as "foreign fighters" in Iraq, three times the number from Syria and Lebanon combined. And—in its way most ominously of all—it is Saudi princes and other regime leaders who have lavished upon American universities, retired diplomats, and maybe even a retired President a plethora of fees, stipends, contributions, and all manner of financial subsidies in an effort to buy off elite opinion.

None of this is even mentioned by Mr. Muravchik. On his account, the neoconservative analysis does not even *consider* whether the needed "war on terror" is not some open-ended, multi-generational struggle against a supra-national amorphous thing called "Islamofascism" but, quite simply, a real war against a real enemy. Whether or not our current struggle is a continuation of World War I or II or III, can one imagine America's leaders in any of those conflicts treating as an "ally" a country that organized, led, staffed, financed, and legitimated the Germans, or the Nazis, or the Communists?

If there are reasons that would justify, from a neoconservative premise, giving the Saudi regime a pass in this war, Mr. Muravchik never sets them forth. If ever such a statement is presented, one can only hope that it will take full account of the damage done to the credibility of our efforts by the widespread perception that the Saudis have enjoyed immunity because the President and, even more so, the Vice President are economically subservient to them. All things told, if the neoconservative approach really is "the only game in town," it is a game played

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by a one-eyed man—hardly something to be enthusiastic about, even if one is living in the country of the blind.

MICHAEL W. SCHWARTZ
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Joshua Muravchik presents a sweeping summary of the history of neoconservatism, and argues that (contrary to what many claim) the Iraq war has vindicated its basic tenets. But at least with respect to his fourth tenet—the "hard Wilsonian" belief in the value of spreading democracy abroad—Mr. Muravchik fails to prove his case.

"Democracy" is far from being synonymous with liberal values. Simply using a ballot box to elect leaders does not create a market economy, or establish an honest judiciary and the rule of law, or guarantee the liberties of sectarian minorities. Our own founding fathers, fearing the tyranny of the mob as much as of the king, fashioned a constitution with a bill of individual rights that a majority could not subvert, reserved a wide range of powers for individual states, and created an elaborate system of checks and balances on the power of the central government.

Absent strong constitutional safeguards and a deep cultural commitment to liberal values, the democratic election of leaders can be disastrous for minorities. In Iraq, a Sunni minority had historically dominated the governmental and industrial elite. A Shiite majority was long suppressed and angry. The Sunnis could quite reasonably have expected that the Shiites would use the ballot box to avenge their grievances. A Sunni boycott of elections and a resort to sectarian violence should not have come as a surprise.

In the early days of our administration of Iraq, we did nothing to create a capitalistic, competitive system for oil production; instead, we left the bulk of the economy under central control. Nor did we promote a federal system with strong regional power centers. But we did promote democratic elections, and we cannot absolve ourselves of responsibility for the consequences.

In the broader Middle East, it is hard to imagine that the outcome of democratic elections would be favorable to our interests and values. Polls of public opinion in the Arab world often reveal unsavory things. Mr. Muravchik himself cites a survey conducted in Egypt in which participants were asked to name the men they most admired. The three "frontrunners"? "Hizballah chief Hassan Nasrallah, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and Khaled Meshal of Hamas." Is this the kind of attitude we should be working to enfranchise?

ROBERT ROSENKRANZ
Intelligence Squared U.S.
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Joshua Muravchik makes several sound points in his brief for neoconservatism's continuing relevance in the war on terror. He is certainly right that our struggle is a moral one, against an evil enemy; that the conflict is global; that military force is an integral part of it; that the UN is not helpful; and that if the Islamists have there way there will be something like a "clash of civilizations."

Still, there is much to question in Mr. Muravchik's argument. He avers that it is "wiser to confront troubles early, even if afar, than to wait for them to ripen and grow nearer." True enough, if those problems are likely to threaten America—but not true in the case of just any injustice; we do not (as John Adams said) go "abroad in search of monsters to destroy." We must confine ourselves to a morality consistent with our welfare and capabilities.

Also questionable is Mr. Muravchik's view that our problem is with a minority of extremists. The nub of the Islamist problem is the masses that find the minority understandable, and would not seriously counter them. A "hard Wilsonian" policy of robustly promoting democracy does little to address this problem and may in fact exacerbate it. In any case, it is not for us to tell others how to govern; it is enough to demonstrate that those who harm America will pay heavily.

ALLEN WEINGARTEN
Monroe Township,
New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

Joshua Muravchik asserts that Ronald Reagan's robust foreign policy helped bring down the Soviet Union, and that the policy and the fall should be seen as triumphs of neoconservatism. But even if he is right about Reagan, the case of the Soviet Union does not exactly vindicate the efficacy of neoconservatism in foreign affairs. Democracy in Russia has been shaky at best, statism has had a resurgence after the briefest of interludes, and the threat of Russian missiles has persisted all along.

Neoconservatism would have us mobilize for many threats, but can its weapons of choice—confrontation, democracy—solve them?

JOHN PEARSON
Springfield, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR:

Joshua Muravchik's thoughtful essay illustrates well why (to paraphrase Mark Twain) reports of the death of neoconservatism have been greatly exaggerated. But he leaves unaddressed an essential critique. It has been said, with some justice, that neoconservatism in its present mutation is too ambitious. It cannot come to terms with gradual progress or "incrementalism" in foreign affairs, since there is always an enemy or even benign dictator to be confronted. Meanwhile, the American people do not have the patience, nor their government the treasure, to carry out all that the neoconservative project entails.

DON KIRK
Reno, Nevada

TO THE EDITOR:

Since COMMENTARY is a magazine of record, I must (once again) correct Joshua Muravchik on the subject of neoconservatism. He writes that the domestic source of that ideological current was the *Public Interest*, "a quarterly founded and edited by Irving Kristol."

No. Kristol was a cofounder, the other founder having been myself. The magazine, as we stated in the first issue, was anti-ideological. In the first five years, the essays it featured on economics were primarily written by the likes of

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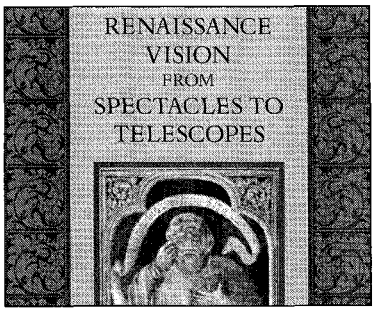

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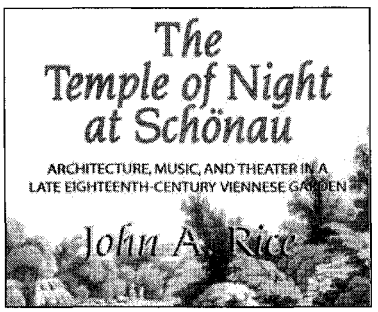

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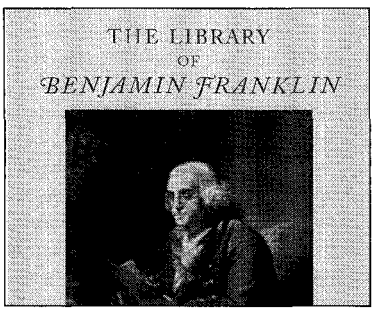
Between 1796 and 1800 Baron Peter von Braun, manager of Vienna's court theaters, transformed his estate at Schönau into an English-style landscape park that included the Temple of Night, a domed rotunda accessible only through a meandering rockwork grotto. Only the ruins of the Temple of Night survive, and John Rice brings it back to life by assembling the many descriptions of it by early nineteenth-century eyewitnesses.



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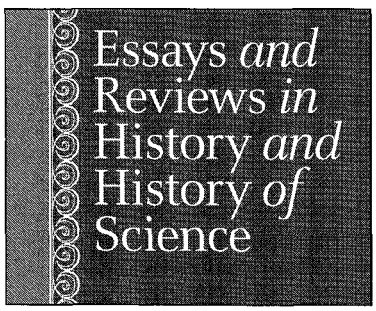
ISBN: 978-0-87169-257-3, $100.00

In the late 1950s, Edwin Wolf 2nd embarked on a bibliographic odyssey to reconstruct the "lost" library of Benjamin Franklin after discovering the unique shelfmarks Franklin used to identify his books. His work, unfinished at the time of his death, was taken up by Kevin J. Hayes as the tercentenary of Franklin's birth approached. Everything found to date, close to 4,000 entries, has been compiled here.



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Thomas Schelling, Robert Solow, Robert Heilbroner, and Edward Kuh (of MIT), the latter of whose demogrant proposals were adopted by George McGovern. A turn did come in 1972, when Kristol publicly supported Richard Nixon for President, though we had originally decided to stay neutral, and I, a Humphrey supporter, reluctantly declared for McGovern.

I stepped down as coeditor that year, and was replaced by Nathan Glazer. Kristol then placed his name foremost on the masthead. All the aforementioned writers stopped writing for the magazine.

DANIEL BELL
Cambridge, Massachusetts

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK writes:

I wish that Michael W. Schwartz were right, that Saudi Arabia—and the Saudi regime in particular—was the sum and substance of what we are up against in the war on terror. But I think the problem is both narrower and broader. It is narrower because the Saudi state as a whole is not waging war against us. Does Mr. Schwartz believe that bin Laden is faking when he says he wants to overthrow that government, and that the government was faking when it stripped bin Laden of his citizenship? The problem is broader because, notwithstanding Saudi terrorists and Saudi terror-funding, jihadism is an ideology that has considerable support throughout the Muslim world. Most of it is not based on Wahhabism; its beginnings are best traced to the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, and it became energized by the Iranian revolution. I wish the solution were as easy as declaring war on Saudi Arabia. Alas, it is much tougher than that.

Robert Rosenkranz points out that elections do not in themselves make for liberal democracy. Quite true, but they are the single most important component. Have bad and illiberal things happened under elected governments? Yes, for sure. But they happen much more frequently under unelected governments. This generalization holds despite the fact that the world is replete with elections in places lacking "strong constitutional safeguards and a deep cultural commitment to liberal values." Recall Churchill's apothegm that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others.

Regarding Iraq, the U.S. authorities have made many mistakes. And it is easy to say that we could have created capitalism, federalism, or whatever else merely by deciding to. The basic hard lesson we learned, however, was that Iraq was not putty in our hand. Were elections in Iraq harmful? On the contrary, had we not held elections and instead tried to rule the country directly as occupiers or indirectly through appointed subalterns, we would have been routed by now. The key to the belated success we have had over the past six months is that an increasing number of Iraqis have figured out that we really do not want to own their country.

Allen Weingarten invokes what John Adams had to say in the 1820's when America was still a relatively small and weak country. It has little relevance for today, when most geostrategic events depend in part on what the U.S. decides to do or not do. Almost every war we have gotten into in the last 90 years was one that we had first tried to avoid being drawn into. Recall our original neutrality in World Wars I and II; our declaration that South Korea lay outside our "defense perimeter"; our refusal to rescue France in Vietnam in the 1950's; our ambassador's assurance to Saddam Hussein that we do not take sides in intra-Arab quarrels; our decision after liberating Kuwait to leave Saddam in power because we had no UN mandate to go to Baghdad; our choice in 1991 to leave Yugoslavia to the EU. The world is highly interconnected, and given our central role most problems devolve to us.

And no, it is not nearly enough "to demonstrate that those who harm America will pay heavily." We demonstrated that to Germany in World War I, but this did not deter Hitler. Nor did the defeat of the Axis stop Stalin from launching the cold war. Nor did our victory in the cold war stop Osama bin Laden. Demonstrating our power is all well and good, but actually using our power is much more essential.

Not that we have the ability to establish peace on earth for all time. John Pearson is right that Russia is sliding back to dictatorship and belligerence. Still, to liken Putin's Russia to what we faced from the USSR is to lose all sense of proportion.

Don Kirk conflates breadth and pace. The U.S. must define its interests broadly in a geographic sense for reasons mentioned in my reply to Mr. Weingarten. But political change is often gradual and incremental, as Mr. Kirk says, and I would not defend any "neoconservatism" that aimed to deny that.

Each time I write about the history of neoconservatism, Daniel Bell rushes to point out that (a) I failed to mention him, and (b) he is not and has never been a neoconservative. Does he not notice a relationship between these two points?

Love & Marriage

TO THE EDITOR:

There is no gainsaying the fact that Judaism and Christianity view celibacy in a different light. About this much I agree with Meir Soloveichik ["Of Rabbis, Priests, and Wives," October 2007]. But the divide between the two religions is perhaps not as wide as he suggests. At the very least, the notion of single-hearted service of God as a consecrated reason to stay unmarried is a rationale that has touched Judaism as well as Christianity.

Consider the case of Rabbi Simeon ben Azzai, who according to the Talmud was known to have said that a man who does not marry (and procreate) is akin to one who sheds blood and diminishes the likeness of God. When one of his colleagues confronted him with the incongruous fact of his own bachelorhood, he replied: "What shall I do? My soul is enamored of the Law; the population of the world can be kept up by others." This rather resembles Jesus' remark that there are those who are celibate for the sake of the kingdom of God.

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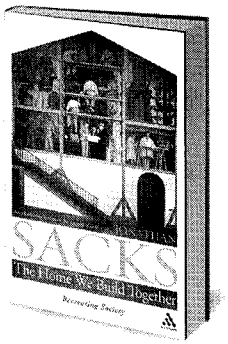
New Books for the New Year



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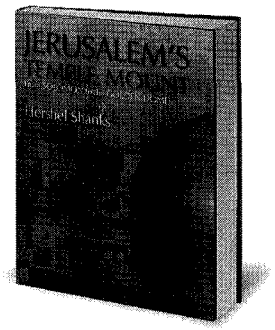
From Solomon to the Golden Dome



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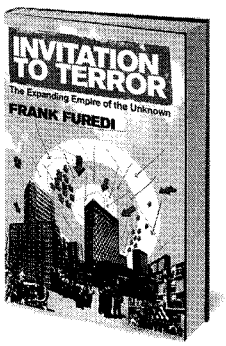

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Disguised As Clark Kent
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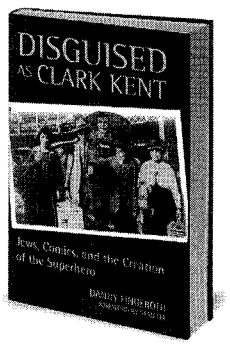

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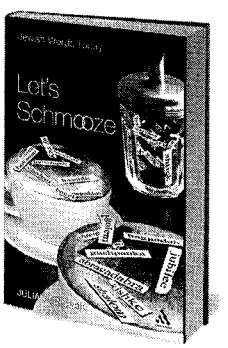

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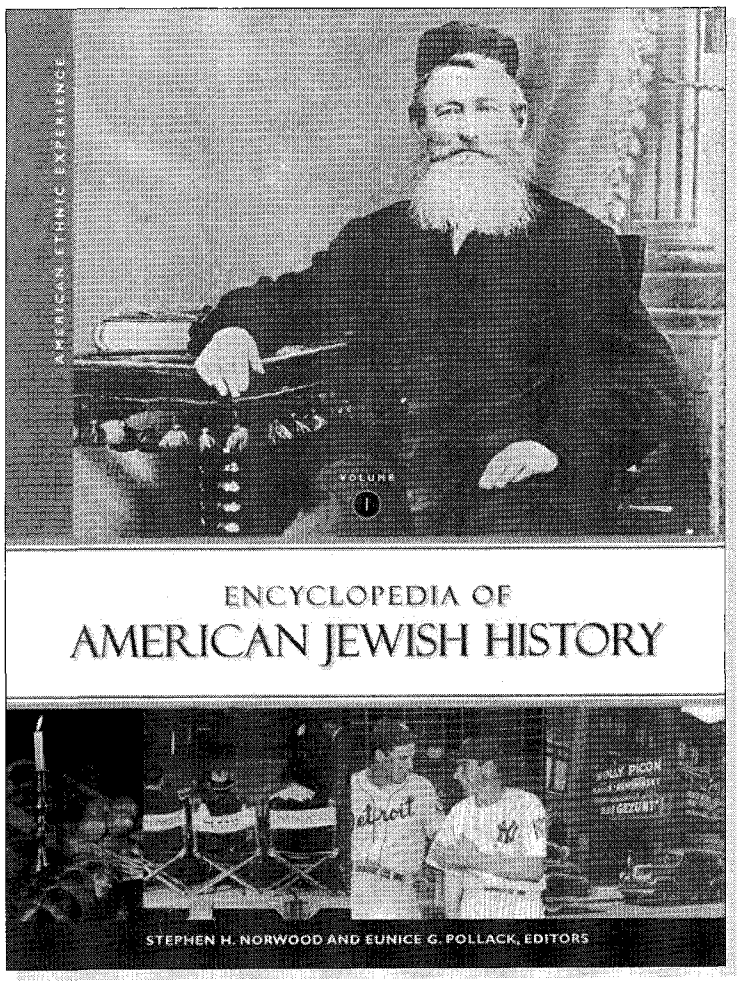

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The Essenes, an ancient Jewish sect, were described by Josephus, Philo, and Pliny as having been celibate. Philo describes another Jewish group, the Therapeutae, who renounced family life for the sake of study, the pursuit of wisdom, and the holy life. The 2nd-century Galilean Rabbi Pinhas ben Yair taught that abstinence was essential to the reception of prophetic wisdom and the Holy Spirit. Then there is Moses, who according to rabbinic tradition was celibate from the time the Lord began to speak to him. It was on the basis of such evidence that the great scholar of Jewish and Christian antiquity Geza Vermes attributed the celibacy extolled by Jesus to traditions within ancient Judaism.

REV. LEONARD F. VILLA
Yonkers, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Meir Soloveichik accepts *prima facie* the assertion by Protestant theologian Stanley Hauerwas that because "Jesus was neither married nor had children," Christians "are not bound by the law to have children" and the "family is not central" to Christian identity.

In fact, Catholic theology holds that the Holy Trinity comprises a family. The Gospels show that Jesus' view of marriage was that of Genesis—man with woman, for life, in a fruitful marriage. If Jesus himself remained celibate and instituted religious celibacy, it was because he was *expanding* the definition of the family, not minimizing its significance. Celibate priests or "eunuchs for the kingdom" are meant to enlarge the family of God through adoption. The spouse of Jesus and of priests is the

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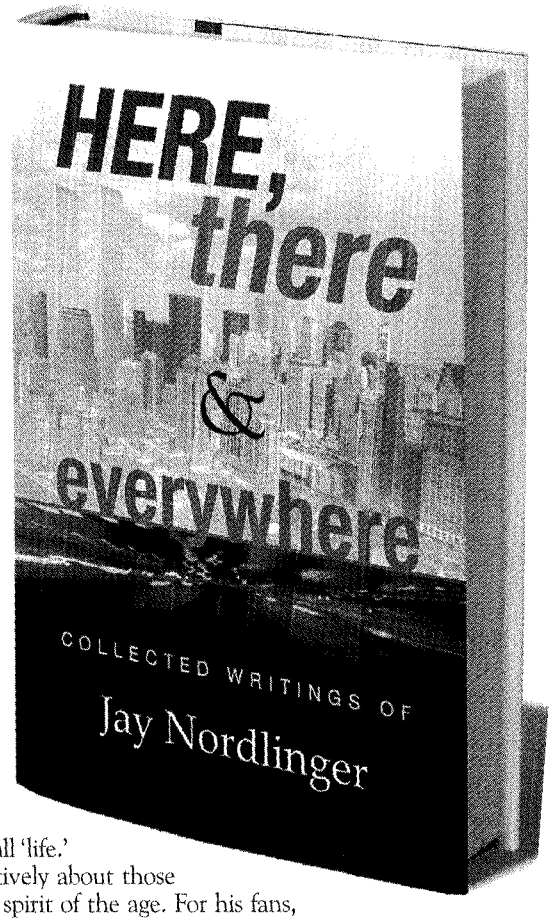

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Church, and the community of believers are their children.

Rabbi Soloveichik takes his philosophical argument too far when he calls into question the "pastoral excellence" of celibate priests. A celibate priest is no less capable of *agape*, or *ahavah*, simply, because he has not passed through *eros*. A Catholic priest learns to love in precisely the same way a married priest or rabbi learns to love: in his family of origin. The measure of love poured out to the child by his mother and father during the early years of his life is the measure of love he will have to pour out for others; all other earthly influences pale in comparison.

JENNIFER O'QUINN
Augusta, Georgia

TO THE EDITOR:

Meir Soloveichik cites the remark of a Catholic theologian identified as "Thomas Vacek" that Thomas Aquinas was the "apostle of *eros*." I believe the proper reference is to Edward Collins Vacek in his book *Love, Human and Divine: The Heart of Christian Ethics*.

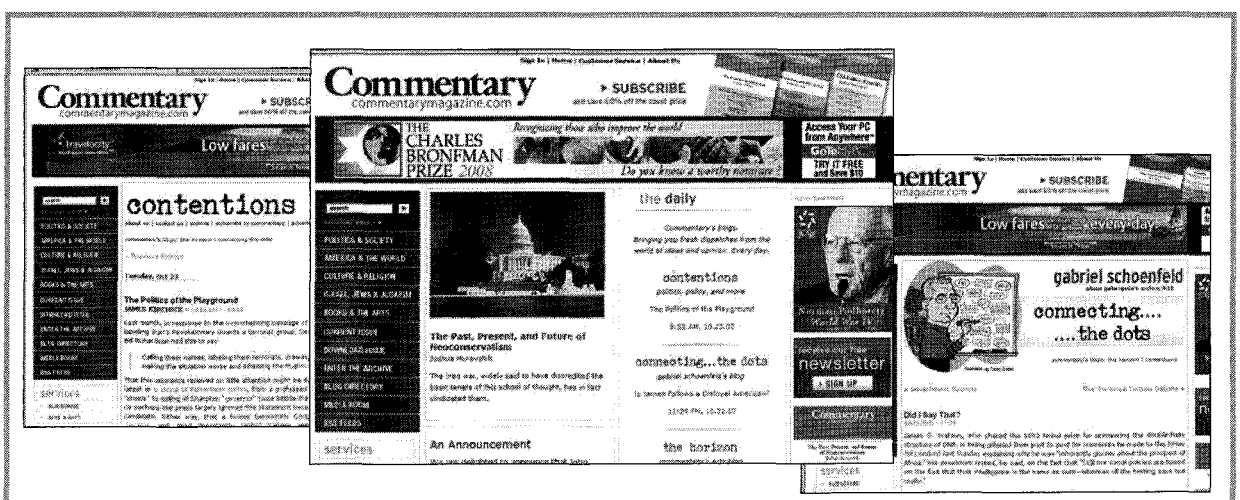
THOMAS BARTLETT
Melbourne, Australia

MEIR SOLOVEICHIK writes:

Father Villa agrees with me that Judaism and Christianity see celibacy in a different light, but the difference is deeper than he thinks. Jesus was understood by his followers to encourage celibacy as a way of life. Paul, in Corinthians, urges many of his readers to remain celibate. According to the rabbinic interpretation of the Bible, by contrast, when Miriam criticizes her brother Moses for not remaining married to his wife, she is told by God that Moses is an exception because *he alone* speaks to the Lord face to face. Similarly, ben Azzai stresses that it would be *wrong* for anyone to follow his example and refrain from having children. In other words, celibacy is a valid option for Christians, and for many the preferred one, whereas Jewish sources with striking unanimity agree that a Jew who deliberately refrains from having children has violated God's command to be fruitful and multiply.

Jennifer O'Quinn asserts that being loved by one's father and mother is sufficient to educate someone about the entire range of human relationships. Receiving parental love is a blessing, but only upon marrying do we truly grasp the love our father and mother had for each other, and only upon having children do we truly comprehend the sacrifices our parents made for us.

I thank Thomas Bartlett for noticing that I inadvertently gave Edward Vacek the Christian name of Aquinas, and I take the opportunity to commend enthusiastically Vacek's *Love, Human and Divine* as one of the great modern works on the theology of love.



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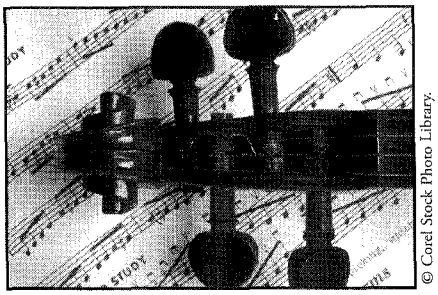

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by learning what the parts of musical speech sound like—rather than what they look like on paper."

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Professor Robert Greenberg holds degrees from Princeton University and the University of California, Berkeley, where he received a Ph.D. in Music Composition. He has composed more than 45 works and has lectured for many prestigious musical and arts organizations. He is music historian-in-residence with San Francisco Performances, the city's premier presenter of chamber music, instrumental and vocal recitals, jazz, and contemporary dance.

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China

TO THE EDITOR:

Toward the beginning of his article, "Are We Ready for China?" [October 2007], Aaron L. Friedberg poses two stark questions: "What if the [People's Republic of China] continues to grow wealthier and stronger without making the transition to liberal democracy? Could a rich, authoritarian China use its newfound power and influence to reshape the world in its own image?"

Advocates for human rights share Mr. Friedberg's unease. China turns a blind eye to abuses in neighboring countries like North Korea and Burma over which it exerts a great deal of influence, and, in its own commercial pursuits in Africa, it is similarly heedless of human rights.

Here at home, we are used to passionate debates about the attention that human-rights issues should be given in our foreign policy. One thinks of the controversies over U.S. policies in South America and Central America in the 1970's and 1980's, or the debates over how to influence South Africa under apartheid. In those cases, there were many independent voices in Congress, among journalists, in our universities, and in myriad groups in society at large that pressed the executive branch to make human rights a priority. Where are the analogous voices to sound the alarm with respect to China? Even among Chinese dissidents who press for more freedoms within their own country, there seems to be little if any inclination to confront the regime over its foreign policy.

JOSHUA RUBENSTEIN
Amnesty International U.S.A.
Somerville, Massachusetts

Ralph Ellison

TO THE EDITOR:

Algis Valiunas is mistaken in calling Arnold Rampersad's biography of Ralph Ellison the first ["Books in Review," October 2007]. Lawrence Jackson's major work, *Ralph Ellison: Emergence of Genius*, was published in 2002. Jackson's biography ends with the publication of "Invisible Man" in 1953, while Rampersad follows the complete trajectory of Ellison's life.

More significantly, Mr. Valiunas criticizes Toni Morrison's putdown of Ellison, but then indirectly joins her ranks and diminishes Ellison by stating that *Invisible Man*, "while an undeniable literary triumph of the first order," is a lesser work than Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March*. I am one of those "many literary types" Mr. Valiunas refers to who consider *Invisible Man* the greatest American novel of the second half of the 20th century and one of the glories of American literature. *Augie March* was the first hardbound novel I ever purchased with high anticipation as an adolescent reader. I carried it around for years, never understanding why it failed to move me. It was only when I came upon Norman Podhoretz's reading of it (reprinted in *The Norman Podhoretz Reader*) that I found validation of my reaction.

Podhoretz writes with characteristic incisiveness of the novel's "frantic and feverish pitch" and the falseness of the "willed buoyancy" of its characters: "*Augie* was largely the product not of a state of being already achieved, but rather of an effort on Bellow's part to act as though he had already achieved it. . . . *Augie* fails—and it fails mainly because its buoyancy is embodied in a character who is curiously untouched by his experience, who never changes or develops, who goes through everything yet undergoes nothing. . . . Bellow seems to be twisting and torturing the language in an almost hysterical effort to get all the juices out of it. . . . There was simply not enough real conviction behind the attitudes out of which the novel was written."

And why is Ellison's masterpiece a lesser work than Bellow's? Mr. Valiunas cites three criteria by which *Augie March* wins: "the relative energy of the prose, abundance of vivid character," and—whatever this means—"sheer brainpower." Does this mean that Bellow's IQ was higher than Ellison's? In any case, Mr. Valiunas is wrong on all three counts. *Invisible Man*'s characters are as vivid as Dostoyevsky's and Dickens's. Its energy is relentlessly intense and explodes off the page. It is, moreover, real energy, not strained or artificial.

DAVID EVANIER
Brooklyn, New York

ALGIS VALIUNAS writes:

Half a life is not a life, whether you are living it or writing it—not even if it is the more interesting half.

Like David Evanier, a good many readers over the years have shared Norman Podhoretz's distaste for *Augie March*; I shall continue to disagree with them. Saul Bellow's novel is the real thing, and *Invisible Man* runs a distinguished but distant second to it.

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Commentary
January 2008

The Peace Planners Strike Again

Hillel Halkin

THE PEEL Commission report (that was in 1937), the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry's recommendations (1946), the UN partition resolution (1947), the Bernadotte plan (1948), the Lausanne conference (1948-49), Security Council Resolution 242 (1967), the Rogers plan (1970), the Jarring mission (1971), the Camp David "framework for peace" (1978), the Madrid conference (1991), the Oslo declaration of principles (1993), the Palestinian-Israeli interim agreement (1995), the Wye summit (1997), the Camp David summit (2000), the Sharm-el-Sheikh summit (2000), the Taba conference (2001), the Bush road map (2003): if none of these could end the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine, what hope is there for Annapolis?

Indeed there is little. When time after time a problem cannot be resolved, it is reasonable to suspect that it may be unresolvable, at least in the manner in which it is conceived. And yet, we have been told, the problem has now come so tantalizingly close to resolution that all it needs is one more little push.

In the talks between Ehud Barak and Yasir Arafat at Camp David in 2000—so goes this assessment—Israel and the Palestinian Authority, with the active mediation of President Clinton, were a hair's breadth away from an agreement. Almost all the pieces were in place. These included the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; a total Israeli withdrawal from the latter and a near-total one from the former, with several settlement blocs being retained by Israel; territorial compensation for the Palestinians in the form of a land swap; and a re-division of Jerusalem with all of its Arab neighborhoods reverting to Arab rule. Although some issues remained unsettled, including the disposition of the Temple Mount and the future of the families of the 1948 Palestinian refugees, here too the gaps had narrowed to bridgeable proportions. But just then, at the last moment, both sides dug in their heels, the second *intifada* erupted, and the deal was off. Annapolis represents a second chance to conclude it, one that must not be missed.

Such is today's received wisdom: the road to Israeli-Palestinian peace has been fully laid out and needs only to be paved in a few last sections. All that is lacking is the political courage on the part of Israeli and Palestinian leaders to stick to the "Clinton parameters" laid down at Camp David, plus the Clinton-like involvement of an American President to keep their minds concentrated on the task. If George W. Bush and his administration are prepared to play this role in their final year in office, an end to the conflict is finally in sight.

HILLEL HALKIN, *who writes from Israel, is a columnist for the* New York Sun *and the author most recently of* A Strange Death. *His "What the Settlements Have Achieved" appeared last month.*

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BUT IT IS not. Even if—*above all* if—a Palestinian state is established along the lines of the Clinton parameters, the conflict will not be over. It will simply downshift for a while into lower gear.

Let us return for a moment to Camp David, whose fourteen days of nonstop activity and all-night negotiating sessions, recurrent deadlines, changing offers and counteroffers, crises, sulks, embraces, cajolings, threats, and arm-twistings were the kind of situation that no statesman rationally seeking to defend his nation's interests should ever allow himself to get into. A Metternich or Bismarck would have shuddered at the thought of making fateful decisions deeply affecting future generations of his countrymen as if he were hammering out a three-year contract in a labor dispute.

Yet even given the concessions wrung from them under such pressure, the two sides were nowhere so close to an agreement as has been alleged. Some of the outstanding issues, such as that of the Temple Mount, might indeed have been settled with more effort; others, like the refugee problem, could probably not have been. And what was agreed upon was only in general terms, leaving numerous details as potential stumbling blocks. There was no true meeting of minds on anything—not on future borders, not on percentages of land to be annexed or swapped, not on the nature of Palestinian demilitarization.

Moreover, even had Barak and Arafat reached an agreement, it would in all likelihood have been impossible to implement. Barak had lost his Knesset majority on the eve of Camp David when a key coalition partner deserted him out of concern that he might make the concessions that he indeed ended up making, and he probably could not have won Knesset approval for those concessions or a governing mandate in new elections. (When elections took place in 2001, he was in fact trounced by Ariel Sharon.) And had Arafat, as Israel insisted to the end, waived the Palestinian refugees' "right of return," something opposed in numerous opinion polls by two-thirds to nine-tenths of the Palestinian public, there might have been a Hamas-led uprising in his lifetime rather than after his death.

Today, the difficulties are only greater. With Gaza in the hands of Hamas and Mahmoud Abbas in shaky control of the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority would have to press for Camp David-plus in order to justify itself to the Palestinian public. And should Israel give it that, or simply repeat Barak's offers, Ehud Olmert, the prime minister with the lowest popularity rating in the country's history, would similarly lose his coalition and new elections, too. Turning the Clinton parameters into the Bush parameters is no magic wand for success.

For Israel, this is just as well. Territorially, an agreement based on Camp David would be a bad deal. In the course of the negotiations there, an initial Israeli demand for annexation of 13 percent of the West Bank was whittled down to 5 or 6 percent, so that the settlement blocs originally designed to make Jerusalem and Tel Aviv less militarily vulnerable not only would have failed to do so but would have become extremely vulnerable in their own right. Large towns like Ariel and Ma'aleh Adumim were reduced on the map to enclaves, Jewish polyps hanging on thin stalks of access roads running through Palestinian territory. Jerusalem itself was turned into a crazy quilt of Jewish and Arab neighborhoods, between whose two national jurisdictions a driver traversing the city might have to pass a dozen times. Were Israel and the Palestinian Authority ever to cease cooperating fully, let alone regress to hostilities, Israel's capital and biggest city would quite simply be paralyzed.

Making things worse was the land swap, a concept introduced at Camp David by Washington in blatant contravention of its own U.S.-sponsored Security Council Resolution 242, which in 1967 called on Israel to withdraw "from territories" occupied in that year's war, not from those belonging to it beforehand. In accepting the principle that West Bank land acquired by Israel had to be paid for in kind, the Israeli negotiators were endorsing the Arab interpretation of 242—an interpretation holding that, against the explicitly stated intentions of the resolution's American and British framers, "from territories" meant from all territories.

This had its consequences. From an initial American proposal of nine square kilometers of Palestinian land for one square kilometer of Israeli land, the ratio was pared down at Camp David to three-to-one, and later at Taba (so the Palestinians would claim) to one-to-one. Apart from the precedent of Israel's ceding sovereign territory to an Arab state, an act that might come back to haunt it one day, this shrank the annexable portion of the West Bank still further. Consequently, when the post-Annapolis Olmert-Abbas negotiations begin, any demand by Israel to retain all of the land now on its side of the West Bank security fence, built in the years after the failure of Camp David, would be a non-starter.

The Clinton parameters were not much better in other areas. On the issue of Palestinian demilitarization, they called for an international rather

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than an Israeli force to monitor the Palestinian state's border with Jordan in order to prevent the smuggling of weapons like rockets and anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles; as is clear from the example of Lebanon, such a force would be worthless. The Americans also rejected Israel's position that its air force should be granted open skies for maneuvers and reconnaissance above Palestinian territory, recommending instead that "the two sides work out special arrangements for Israeli training and operational needs." It is safe to assume that the Palestinians will construe these needs as minimal.

And then there are the refugees. Instead of stating forthrightly that a Jewish state should not be expected to accept any of them, the Clinton parameters listed "admission to Israel," albeit subject to its "sovereign decision," as one of five possible solutions for the problem. And lest anyone think that such a decision would be strictly Israel's own business, President Clinton also suggested that Israel "indicate" in advance that "some of the refugees could be absorbed." Ehud Olmert will thus have to start his talks with Mahmoud Abbas not with an Israeli refusal to accept any refugees but with a debate over how many must be accepted.

This is Ehud Barak's legacy to Olmert, and it is not a happy one. Normally, if one bargains for a rug in a bazaar and the rug merchant turns down one's final offer, one is not obliged to make that into one's opening offer the next time around. But in the world of Israeli-Arab negotiations, in which Israeli concessions are routinely "pocketed" with no Arab quid pro quo, the logic of the marketplace does not apply. Here Israel's last offer is automatically expected to be its first one whenever bargaining resumes.

The Palestinians have often been faulted, even by observers sympathetic to their cause, for failing to compromise at critical junctures. They are the people, in the endlessly quoted words of Abba Eban, who have never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity. Had they only said yes in 1947, they could have had their state then. In 2000 they missed their chance again. Now, at Annapolis, history has come knocking once more. They would be serial bunglers indeed to slam the door in its face this time, too.

But this is an unfair and condescending judgment. It treats the Palestinians as beggars who have to take what is offered them or stand accused of improvidence. Why, in 1947, should a people that outnumbered the Jewish minority in its midst by two-to-one have agreed to divide its living space, as the UN partition resolution decreed, on a 55-45 basis with the Jews getting the larger share? Why, in 2000, now offered a mere 20 percent of this space, should it not have fought tooth-and-nail over every inch of it? And why, in the negotiations set to take place in 2008, should it be any more conciliatory than it was in 2000?

The answer given us is: so that the Palestinians can finally have their state. But what kind of state would such a mini-Palestine be? It would consist of two detached parcels of land, without an army to defend them, totaling 6,250 square kilometers, the size of Delaware. Its smaller part, the Gaza Strip, would be overcrowded and impoverished; its larger one, the West Bank, would consist of half desert and semi-arid countryside; and neither would be capable of absorbing more than a small fraction of the Palestinian diaspora that dreams of returning to the homeland it believes was stolen from it. Meanwhile, next door, on nearly four-fifths of that homeland, a far more prosperous and powerful Israel would only inspire envy and resentment. What exactly would Palestinians have to rejoice in?

There are of course sovereign states that are even smaller. The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has 5,128 square kilometers. Luxembourg has 2,586. Malta has 316. But such countries were not born in ethnic warfare and partition; they do not seethe with grievance and humiliation; they are not supposed to provide a solution for millions of exiles; they are not lived in by a people, grown accustomed to strutting on the world stage, that stands to be diminished by its own independence to a bit role.

It is said that the Palestinians should take their example from the Jews, who in 1947 agreed to a state that fell far short of their aspirations, too. And indeed if one looks at the 1947 partition map, the Jewish state born from it would have been a cripple, three unconnected limbs of Mandate Palestine separated by Arab corridors and minus Jerusalem and half the Galilee. It is impossible to envision such an Israel having continued to exist for long—nor did it, for in the fighting that broke out after Arab rejection of partition, it enlarged itself by half, joined its severed parts, and carved out a link to Jerusalem, whose Jewish half became its capital.

Precisely this, however, is why any comparison of the current situation of the Palestinians with that of the Jews in 1947 is ironically double-edged. For it is clear today that even had the Arabs accepted partition, Israel would eventually have had to go to war to break out of its straitjacket. Although not discussed openly, this was something understood by most Zionist leaders in agreeing to partition,

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which they saw as a crucial but not final step in consolidating Jewish power. Without partition there would have been no Jewish state to develop the institutions of sovereignty, to absorb Jewish refugees and immigrants from Europe and the Arab lands—and to build an army capable of expanding partition's borders.

When one asks, therefore, why the Palestinians have not done what the Jews did, one is really asking why they did not accept statehood at Camp David in 2000 with a public commitment to peace and a private determination to pursue irredentist policies. This is a good question, part of the answer to which may indeed be their psychological inability to set aside their wounded pride and sense of the injustice done them for the sake of long-term goals. Yet there is more to it than that, for it can be plausibly argued that it is their very adherence to these goals that best explains their behavior.

The Palestinians, after all, know that statehood will never enable them to defeat Israel on the battlefield by themselves; even were they not demilitarized, they can never possess the economic means to match Israel's military might. What prospect they have of destroying Israel, or of weakening it to the point where additional territory could be wrested from it, would depend on one of two options. The first of these, championed by Hamas, is to resist the temptation of Palestinian independence and preserve the status quo until Israeli-Palestinian disentanglement becomes impossible and a bi-national state emerges whose Arab population with its higher birthrate inevitably becomes a majority.

The second option, preferred by the Palestinian "moderates," is to choose statehood, however degrading its terms, while seeking to undermine Israel from within and keeping other Arab countries embroiled with it so that they remain military allies. These two ambitions would be related, for the more a growing and disgruntled Arab minority in Israel protests its second-class status, and the more Israel is accused of denying Palestinian refugees their "right of return," the more the Arab world will go on nourishing hostile feelings toward it. If Israel does not fall by itself, a tiny Palestinian state could then still count on provoking a decisive war into which its Arab neighbors could be dragged when the right time came.

ON THE FACE of it, the Palestinians' insistence on their "right of return" to homes lost 60 years ago in Israel is absurd. It would be absurd quite apart from the fact that no such right was ever demanded on behalf of far larger refugee populations in the 20th century, such as the millions of Greeks thrown out of Turkey in 1921-22, the similar numbers of Germans evicted from Poland and Czechoslovakia in 1945, or the tens of millions of Muslims and Hindus who fled India and Pakistan in 1948. It is also absurd for the simple reason that most of these homes no longer exist and those that do cannot be returned to.

The majority of Palestinians who fled Israel in 1948 were rural; nearly all of their villages were razed to the ground long ago to make room for Jewish settlements and Jewish agriculture. Of those who were city dwellers, some lived in houses and neighborhoods that are still standing; yet for the last half-century these have been inhabited by Israelis who are their legal owners and cannot be made to surrender them. Where in Israel would the families of refugees go if their "right of return" were recognized? The poorer would end up in Israeli Arab slums hardly more congenial than the "refugee camps" they reside in now. The wealthier would find that their present homes in Amman or Damascus are grander than anything they could afford in Haifa or Jaffa. None would be returning to family property, and all would be choosing to live in a Jewish state whose customs are alien and where they might be discriminated against in various ways. How could this, rather than financial compensation or resettlement elsewhere, be the preferred option of most Palestinians?

And in fact it is not. The same polls that show a large majority of Palestinians vehemently supporting the "right of return" to Israel, a country that few of them have ever been in, report that not many are interested in "returning" there themselves. As in the old Jewish joke that a Zionist is a Jew who gives money to a second Jew in order to send a third Jew to Palestine, the average Palestinian would like another Palestinian to exercise the "right of return" for him.

But this is no reason for Israel to give ground on the refugee issue in the false belief that it is a purely symbolic one. In a diaspora of many millions, there will always be poor and unemployed Palestinians sufficiently attracted by Israel's need for cheap labor to move there, and there will always be a Palestinian establishment to encourage them. If Ehud Olmert offers "symbolically" to accept 10,000 Palestinian refugees annually for five years, Mahmoud Abbas will ask for 50,000; if a compromise is reached, the Palestinians will fight to have it worded in such a way that it can be challenged later. There will always be pretexts for claiming

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that Israel has not honored the "right of return" as it promised to.

There will always be pretexts, too, for claiming that Israel is a systemically "racist" society that must be made to surrender its Jewish identity. It is already clear that a long-term campaign along these lines, in close collaboration with a Palestinian state, is the future strategy of Israel's own Arab leadership. It will not be bought off by half-measures. If Israel gives greater equality to its Arab citizens, it will be told to repeal the Law of Return that gives every Jew the right to immigrate and settle in the country; if it repeals the Law of Return, it will face a demand for Israeli Arab political autonomy; if it grants political autonomy, heavily populated Arab areas will vote for *Anschluss* with the state of Palestine. Occupying only a small part of the country that Palestinians will still consider rightfully their own, this state will find Palestinian irredentism an overpowering temptation.

This is why, though political commentators may have trouble understanding it, the stubbornness of Palestinian "moderates" on the refugee issue, and their refusal to recognize the Jewish character of Israel, are not bargaining chips they can be expected to give up. They are strategic positions. From the Palestinians' point of view, despite all the suffering caused by the Israeli occupation, there is no hurry. If they achieve a state on their own terms, well and good. If not, so much the better. One way or another, time is on their side.

The hard fact is that British Mandate Palestine never was, and is not today, big enough to accommodate both a Jewish and an Arab state. The "two-state" solution never could succeed and never will.

To assert as much is not to propose an "undivided land of Israel" stretching from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River. Change "land of Israel" to "Palestine," and you have the solution of Hamas. A Jewish state entertaining any such idea would be engaged in a romantic form of suicide.

Israel will have to withdraw, for the sake of its own survival, from most of the West Bank. It should not do so, however, as part of a settlement establishing a Palestinian state that can only be a permanent danger to it. On the contrary: it should withdraw on its own and in such a way that a Palestinian state will not come into being. Pulling back to the security fence while holding on to all of Jerusalem, without which no Palestinian state is possible, would be the best way of accomplishing this. As I have argued before in these pages, Israel has only one responsibility toward the Palestinians of the West Bank: either to give them full equality as Israeli citizens or to give them full freedom without Israeli occupation or control. It does not owe them a state and has no interest in their having one.

What, then, would happen to them? As I have also argued, left to their own devices the West Bankers would sooner or later join up again with Jordan, a country of 90,000 square kilometers with which they were united between 1949 and 1967. Over half of Jordan's nearly 5.5 million inhabitants are already of Palestinian origin. Physically and culturally, the western part of Jordan is a mirror-image replica of the West Bank. Palestinians have always felt at home in it, more than in any other part of the Arab world.

It is said in objection to this that King Abdullah and the Jordanian ruling class, whose Bedouin origins are not Palestinian, fear an eventual Palestinian takeover, do not therefore want the West Bank with its large and politically unruly Palestinian population, and cannot be forced to re-absorb it against their will. This is true. But the Jordanian ruling class has even more to fear from Islamic fundamentalists than it does from Palestinians, who are well integrated in Jordanian society, and the chaotic West Bank reality that would be left behind by an Israeli withdrawal may make Jordan or Hamas the only two alternatives. In such a case, it is not difficult to imagine Abdullah, with the agreement of Israel and moderate Palestinian elements, sending his army into the West Bank to take control of it. This would be in the Jordanian—as well as in the American and European—interest, not as a favor to Israel.

As for the Gazans, they can be left to stew in the juices of Hamas for as long as it takes for them either to revolt or for Israel to move in militarily and throw Hamas out. In the end, a Jordanian solution would be best for them, too. Transferred to Jordanian sovereignty with a corridor through Israel, Gaza would give Jordan a seaport on the Mediterranean, which would be an economic boon for both parties.

Needless to say, such a scenario has its own potential perils. If the Hashemite regime in Amman ever fell to Palestinian or Islamic radicals, Israel would find itself in a serious situation. On the whole, however, it is safe to say that Palestinian irredentism would be better contained within a Jordanian framework. As citizens of a large and potentially prosperous country like Jordan, the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza would not feel

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cooped up in a miniature polity in which their opportunities were limited and their frustrations were great. Israel would no longer be the envied big neighbor next door. The grief and anger for what was lost in 1948 would be easier to manage. They might even, with the passage of time, be gotten over entirely.

WILL THE Olmert-Abbas negotiations fail like all their predecessors? Let us hope so.

Indeed, it is not entirely clear who wants them to succeed. The U.S. State Department and Condoleezza Rice, certainly. Likewise, one presumes, the 49 governments that sent foreign ministers or delegates to the Annapolis meeting. And of course, Israel's eternally hopeful president Shimon Peres, who constructively predicted that Annapolis's failure would be a "catastrophe." And editorial writers and political commentators all over the world who echoed him. But Ehud Olmert? Mahmoud Abbas? President Bush?

Olmert, it might be recalled, is the politician who was elected eighteen months ago on a platform calling for the implementation of Ariel Sharon's unilateral withdrawal plan, which he had strongly backed and which he inherited when Sharon had his stroke. It is not entirely clear what has happened since then to change his mind. Perhaps Hamas's seizure of power in Gaza and the continuing rocket and mortar attacks from there; perhaps Israel's botched war against Hizballah; perhaps the moderate tones of Abbas. And perhaps Olmert, knowing that the time for a West Bank unilateral withdrawal is not ripe, believes that one last round of failed talks with the Palestinians is needed to ripen it.

Abbas, too, may be playing a cagy game. If talks with Olmert are to succeed, they will demand concessions from him that he can hardly afford to make; but if they do not take place at all, his position at the head of the Palestinian Authority is supernumerary. Dragging talks on for as long as possible while alternately ascribing a glimmer of hope to them and blaming Israel for their lack of progress may be his best bet.

And George W. Bush? On the one hand, the President did all he could to make Annapolis a gala occasion and committed himself to following up on it. On the other hand, his pointed remarks in his Annapolis address about Israel's being "a homeland for the Jewish people" indicate that he is perfectly aware of the crucial importance of such a definition, which the Palestinians have repeatedly refused to accept. Perhaps he believes they will reconsider. Perhaps he believes they will not. He has spent his first seven years in the White House as the greatest friend Israel has ever had there. One tends to think that that is how he will leave it.

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Stem Cells and the President
An Inside Account

Jay P. Lefkowitz

On August 9, 2001, President Bush announced a compromise decision on the contentious question of whether the federal government should provide financial support for research into the curative properties of human stem cells extracted from embryos.

Bush's compromise allowed funding for research into embryonic stem cells that had already been harvested. At the same time, he disallowed funding for procedures that would collect stem cells from frozen (but still living) embryos, since doing so would require their destruction. In the case of those already collected, he said, "The life-or-death decision has already been made." But that life-or-death decision would not be made anew with taxpayer dollars.

This decision pleased no one. *The New York Times* set the stage for what would become an enduring critique of Bush and the Republican party when it declared the next morning that the new policy would severely "hamper the government's ability to spur this important new area of medical research."

The President got a chilly reception from his supporters on the Right as well. Comparing certain kinds of stem-cell research to the practices of Josef Mengele, the notorious Nazi doctor, Ken Connor of the socially conservative Family Research Council called the decision a "blot" on Bush's record. Judie Brown, the president of the American Life League, told the *Times* that the President "can no longer describe himself as pro-life."

The criticism did not subside over time. Democrats sought to use the stem-cell issue to their advantage, and succeeded. Over the next years, to spectacular fundraising effect, the party would tout its vehement opposition to Bush's policy. In 2006, a close Senate race in Missouri tilted decisively toward the Democrats after the airing of an emotionally affecting television advertisement featuring the actor Michael J. Fox, who suffers from Parkinson's disease and who attacked the Republican candidate for his retrograde position on the matter. That victory in Missouri was a key factor in the Democratic takeover of the Senate from the GOP in November. When Democratic Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi assumed control of the House of Representatives in early 2007, she declared that undoing the Bush policy was one of her top priorities.

For their part, Republicans have mostly remained in a defensive crouch on the issue, and have tried to avoid discussing it at all. But Bush himself has never wavered, and last year he even used the first two vetoes of his tenure to repel congressional attempts to override the policy.

And then, in November 2007, something remarkable happened. Two of the world's leading sci-

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entific journals, *Cell* and *Science*, published findings from researchers in the United States and Japan demonstrating a technique that allows, without the destruction of human embryos, the creation of stem cells identical to those taken from human embryos. The significance of the innovation was undeniable. George Daly, a researcher at the Harvard Stem Cell Institute, called it "just a spectacular, spectacular advance. It will change everyone's thinking about the field." Ian Wilmut, the Scottish researcher who became famous for his role in cloning Dolly the sheep a decade ago, told the *Daily Telegraph* he would no longer pursue cloning to produce stem cells, making use instead of this new and wholly uncontroversial method.

WE DO NOT know enough yet to say whether, or to what degree, Bush's refusal to allow federal funding to create new embryonic stem-cell lines played a role in compelling scientists to find a different approach to the issue. We do know that, in the aftermath of last November's announcement, several leading scientists have suddenly testified in public to having harbored the very same moral doubts that led Bush to his 2001 decision. James Thomson, the foremost stem-cell researcher in the United States, put it plainly: "If human embryonic stem-cell research does not make you at least a little bit uncomfortable, you have not thought about it enough."

This was not, to put it mildly, a view openly expressed by the scientific community in the years between Bush's decision and the discovery of the new method. But remarks like Thomson's, and the fact that a scientific advance unthinkable in 2001 has rendered one of the ugliest controversies of the decade all but moot, suggest that it is time to revisit Bush's decision to see what lessons can be drawn from it.

In the United States, domestic policy is usually made when Congress sends the President a piece of legislation. He and his administration will often have been deeply involved in the crafting of that legislation, which he is then given to sign or to veto. In this case, in part by statute, and in part (as we shall see) because of a legal finding by the Clinton administration, Bush found himself with the sole authority to decide how the National Institutes of Health (NIH) should apportion its research dollars on stem cells. The decision was his to render, and his alone.

Months before his final announcement, Bush personally set in motion a highly unusual process of deliberation inside the White House. The process combined philosophical and scientific research with investigations into both the morality and the practicality of various policy options. As the White House official primarily responsible for advising the President on this issue, I had a unique perspective on the controversy surrounding it and on the making of the policy announced in August 2001. Now that this policy appears to have been both vindicated and superseded, it seems to me legitimate to speak publicly about the mechanics of what happened inside the White House during those months.

THERE ARE all kinds of stem cells. Adults and children have them, animals have them, and they exist in the placenta of pregnant women and in the umbilical cord of infants as well. Stem cells are of special interest because they can "differentiate"—i.e., transform themselves into other cell types—and this ability has suggested that they may present a key to curing diseases and abnormalities at the most basic level of life. As for stem cells derived in particular from human embryos, many scientists believe that they have a unique quality—they are able to transform themselves into any type of cell in the human body. Theoretically, then, an embryonic stem cell could ultimately play a part (in a process using recombined DNA) in replacing any defective body tissue or diseased organ.

When Bush took office in January 2001, only a handful of scientists, led by James Thomson, were conducting research on embryonic stem-cell "lines"—i.e., generations of cells from a single source that had been grown and replicated in test tubes. (Thomson, working with the Israeli scientist Joseph Itzkowitz, had first isolated human embryonic stem cells in 1998.) While no federal law banned such research if funded privately, there had also been no federal support of it. This was owing to the Dickey Amendment, a piece of legislation passed in 1995 that precluded federal funding of "research in which a human embryo or embryos are destroyed."

In 1999, the situation changed somewhat when one of President Clinton's lawyers advised that the wording of the Dickey Amendment might, after all, permit some public funding of human embryonic stem-cell research—if, to be precise, the embryos had been previously destroyed through the use of *private* funds. The technical rationale was that, under such circumstances, taxpayer dollars would not be going to research "in which" embryos were destroyed. The Clinton administration drew up guidelines to support federal funding

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based on this legal position, but did not implement them prior to Bush's inauguration.

MY OWN involvement in the issue began several weeks after Bush took office in January 2001, when I was serving in the White House as general counsel in the Office of Management and Budget. On February 21, 80 Nobel laureates signed a letter to the President urging federal funding for research on embryonic stem cells. Then, on March 6, Tommy Thompson, the newly installed Secretary of Health and Human Services, told a Senate panel that a law restricting such research would trouble him. The next day, a member of the White House press corps asked Ari Fleischer, Bush's press secretary, if the President agreed with Thompson. Fleischer responded, "The President is very understanding and respectful of the promises of science, but he's very concerned about any procedure that would involve taking stem cells from fetuses that are viable."

The very next day, Nightlight Christian Adoptions, an organization devoted to protecting frozen embryos and facilitating their adoption by potential parents, filed a lawsuit in federal court to prevent the government from implementing the Clinton guidelines. The suit claimed that the Dickey Amendment forbade such action.

The combination of Thompson's comments and the new lawsuit put pressure on the President to articulate his position fully, and Joshua Bolten, who was then the deputy chief of staff, asked me to take the lead in investigating the issues involved and presenting Bush with options. Thus began a five-month odyssey that brought me—and, more important, the President—into direct and constant contact with scientists, doctors, ethicists, religious figures, advocates for research into countless diseases, and lawmakers.

In my first meeting with the President about stem cells, we discussed the basic issue in broad strokes. He was not being asked to assess the legality or even the wisdom of stem-cell research per se. No law in the country banned it, nor was anyone in either party pressing for such a ban. Rather, the question being put to him was whether he would authorize the use of *federal* funds—i.e., monies allocated by Congress for scientific investigation, to be conducted by the National Institutes of Health, in the area of embryonic stem cells alone.

I led a team of lawyers in our own evaluation of the Dickey Amendment. We decided that while spending federal dollars on such research might violate the spirit of the amendment, it would not violate the letter. Responsibility for adjudicating the divide between spirit and letter was necessarily the President's as the nation's chief executive officer.*

As a first step, Bush asked me to prepare a set of background reading materials on the scientific aspects of stem-cell research. He also asked for a summary of the relevant laws of other countries, and a description of what the world's leading religions had to say on the issue. Once I began turning in my memos, a day rarely passed when he did not call with a follow-up request or a question about something he had read. It was clear that in addition to the material I submitted, he was also finding other things to read and was talking about stem cells with friends and intimates.

One morning at 6:30, my wife summoned me from the shower to answer a call from the White House; the President had been speaking about the issue the night before with a friend and had a barrage of questions he wanted me to answer or look into immediately. At a ceremony in the Rose Garden, Bush saw a physician he knew and invited him back to the Oval Office where they spent fifteen minutes discussing stem cells. During a birthday party for a member of the White House medical unit, the President asked each of the doctors present to set forth his own position. At a gathering with medical groups and doctors to discuss the pending Patients' Bill of Rights, he queried each physician about the scientific potential of stem-cell research, the ethical quandaries involved, and what the best public policy would be.

Bush also discussed the issue on many occasions with individual members of Congress, and spoke about it to nearly all the members of his Cabinet. (After one Cabinet meeting, Secretary of State Colin Powell followed him into the Oval Office to make sure Bush was aware of his views.) Nor did he confine himself to the precincts of the White House or of Washington. In May, traveling to Notre Dame to give the commencement speech, he spoke with the university's president, Father Edward Malloy, and a number of scientists on the faculty. The next day, at Yale, he sat down with Harold Varmus, who had served under Clinton as director of the NIH and was the president of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

In the meantime, the White House was inundated with calls and letters, many from scientists and

* Bush had never taken an official position on this matter, though in the course of running for the presidency, and before the Clinton administration had formulated its legal analysis, his campaign responded to a question with the statement that "the Governor opposes federal funding for stem-cell research that involves destroying a living human embryo."

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advocates of one position or another. In my assigned job of keeping the President current, I held meeting after meeting with stem-cell researchers, molecular biologists, doctors, members of Congress, and activists on all sides. I also received an unforgettable phone call from the actor Christopher Reeve, who had been paralyzed from the neck down after a riding accident. He spoke passionately and poignantly, and very personally, about the promise of stem-cell research for spinal-cord injuries. Reeve would tell reporters on the night of Bush's August 9 speech that it represented "a step in the right direction," but before his death in 2004 he would become a vocal critic.

IN EARLY JUNE, after a meeting with Bush and the three other White House aides materially involved in the matter—chief of staff Andy Card, communications director Karen Hughes, and political deputy Karl Rove—I began to organize semi-formal private sessions for the President in the Oval Office. Card blocked off regular 30-minute sessions on the President's schedule; remarkably, for a White House that prided itself on extreme punctuality, every one of these ran longer, sometimes considerably longer, because of Bush's questions and challenges to the attendees.

On one day, he met separately with representatives from National Right to Life and then from the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Although the recommendations made by each group were predictable, the discussions in both cases were substantive and at times very personal. "We're here on behalf of our children," one of the leaders of the diabetes foundation told the President. "I'm defending my family." When a member of the National Right to Life delegation took out a public-opinion poll to bolster his claim that opposition to stem-cell research would be a winning issue politically, Bush swatted the paper away and replied with uncommon sharpness: "This is too important an issue to take polls about. I am going to decide this based on what I believe is right."

Often, even visitors who strongly supported funding for embryonic research acknowledged the complexities. "They are not a person. They are not alive," insisted Doug Melton, a leading stem-cell researcher at Harvard. "On the other hand, they are not to be treated cavalierly. Part of this is the mystery of biology." As with so many others, Melton had a view that went beyond the professional: his son suffered from diabetes and, he said, "there is nothing I won't do to try to help my son." Bush responded that he well understood childhood diseases, having lost his younger sister, Robin, to leukemia when he was seven.

On the hard science of embryonic research, the meetings reflected a greater ambiguity than boosterish media reports indicated was the case. Several scientists told Bush plainly that the efficacy of embryonic stem cells remained to be proved. As a result, some felt that only a few lines were needed to determine whether the field had genuine potential or was just a pipe dream. Indeed, in an interview with the *New York Times* shortly before Bush's August speech, Irving Weissman of Stanford stated that "a finite number [of stem-cell lines] would be sufficient. If we had 10-15 lines, no one would complain."

As with Christopher Reeve, Weissman would later change his tune and become one of the President's most persistent critics. Given the state of play at the time, however, Weissman's comment made perfect sense. There had already been two decades of research using embryonic stem cells derived from mice, and 90 percent of that research had been conducted using only five distinct lines.

If our meetings with scientists and advocates were memorable, our discussions of the moral issues were disturbing and haunting. One session involved the bioethicist LeRoy Walters from Georgetown University; another was with John Mendelsohn, the head of the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Texas. During a meeting with several participants, the President laid out a series of moral challenges. For example, if an embryo was going to be destroyed anyway, was it not appropriate, perhaps even desirable, to use its stem cells to save other human lives? In response, one person asked whether, on the same grounds, it should not be considered equally acceptable to extract organs from a death-row inmate moments before his execution; after all, society had already decided that he had forfeited his right to live. Another suggested that federal funding might have the unintended consequence of creating financial incentives that would encourage the creation of frozen embryos in order to destroy them.

A few days later, I brought into the Oval Office my copy of *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley's 1932 anti-utopian novel, and as I read passages aloud imagining a future in which humans would be bred in hatcheries, a chill came over the room.

"We're tinkering with the boundaries of life here," Bush said when I finished. "We're on the edge of a cliff. And if we take a step off the cliff, there's no going back. Perhaps we should only take one step at a time."

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On July 9, the President held the discussion in which, I believe, he began to conceive the outlines of his new policy. Two bioethicists—Leon Kass of the University of Chicago and Daniel Callahan of the Hastings Center for Bioethics—came into the Oval Office together. Bush opened the discussion with these words:

> I must confess I am wrestling with a difficult decision. It's a difficult issue for me. On one hand, it offers so much hope; on the other, so much despair. I worry about a culture that devalues life. I think my job is to encourage respect for life. On the other hand, I believe technologies and science will help solve many medical problems, and I have great hope for cures.

One of the two guests responded: "You are not alone. There are a lot of people who, the more they know about this issue, the more complex they realize it is and the more ramifications it has."

There then ensued a broad discussion of the ethics of stem-cell research—in particular, the implications of utilizing the fruits of already destroyed embryos to try to develop cures for people suffering from truly deadly diseases. Kass averred: "We at least owe them [the frozen embryos] the respect not to manipulate them for our own purposes." After all, he continued, "We are dealing with the seeds of what could be the next generation." But then Bush asked what Kass thought of conducting research on stem cells that had *already* been extracted from embryos. Kass, who would later become chairman of Bush's Council on Bioethics, responded: "If you fund research on lines that have already been developed, you are not complicit in their destruction."

In late July, Bush called Karen Hughes and me into his office and shared with us his tentative decision—his compromise. He asked us to begin drafting a set of remarks. A couple of days later he met with Ruth Kirschstein, the acting director of NIH, and three leading NIH researchers. The President pointedly asked how many embryonic stem-cell lines were already in existence. Soon afterward the report came back that more than 30 lines had already been created, and more might be found in laboratories elsewhere around the world. According to the final NIH tally, more than 60 embryonic stem-cell lines existed in varying stages of development.*

We spent the next week writing, editing, and revising with Bush. Then he asked us to join him at his ranch in Crawford where he would deliver the speech, his first major address to the nation since the State of the Union in late January. On the morning of the speech, the President invited me to go jogging with him under the already blistering Texas sun. Only a few hundred yards into our three-mile run, I knew that if I were to survive, much less keep up, I would have to concentrate on breathing and let him do all the talking. So I asked how he felt about his decision.

He said he was content with it, even though he knew he would be attacked from both the Left and the Right. He expected, correctly as it turned out, that the initial reaction would be harsher from his friends than from his opponents (because he would be crossing a bright line by funding *any* kind of embryo research). In fact, about fifteen minutes before he spoke, he asked Karl Rove to brief five leading Congressional opponents of stem-cell research on what he would say. All five expressed disappointment.

In his speech that night, Bush took his audience through the moral ambiguity of stem-cell research as well as its medical promise, treating the arguments on both sides with equal respect. Until the end, it was unclear where he would come out. "Even the most noble ends," Bush observed, "do not justify any means," and while we must "devote enormous energy to conquering disease, it is equally important that we pay attention to the moral concerns raised by the new frontier of human embryo stem-cell research." Nevertheless, he concluded, because of its enormous promise, which "we all hope will be fulfilled," he would now authorize federal funding on, and only on, those embryonic lines that had already been created.

And there the matter stood. Research into embryonic stem cells continued, with and without federal funding. Democrats sought political advantage. Republicans fretted. In 2004, voters in California approved $3 billion in taxpayer dollars to fund embryonic stem-cell research in their own state. Last November, voters in New Jersey went in the opposite direction, rejecting a measure similar to California's that would have cost them $450 million. And then, only days after the New Jersey vote, came the announcement that it would no longer be necessary to use embryos to do embryonic stem-cell research.

Now that the debate seems to be over, what can we say about Bush's policy and the long months it took for him to devise it? I think it is fair to look

* There are currently 21 fully developed lines available for federally funded research, and NIH has sent out more than 700 shipments of such embryonic stem cells.

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upon it as a model of how to deal with the complicated scientific and ethical dilemmas that will continue to confront political leaders in the age of biotechnology. Bush refused to accept the notion that we must choose between medical research and the principle of the dignity of life at every stage. He sought both to advance biomedical science and at the same time to respect the sanctity of human life. In the end he came to a moderate, balanced decision that drew a prudent and principled line. The decision was both informed and reasoned, based on lengthy study and consultation with people of widely divergent viewpoints. It was consciously *not* guided by public-opinion polls.

As I write these last words, I am aware that they may sound like political spin. That is far from the case. There were many other contentious issues on which I advised the President—affirmative action, gay marriage, contraception, offshore oil and gas exploration, international trade, patent protection, even veterans' benefits. In each of these, political considerations and calculations played at least some role in the development of policy, as they always have and always will. What made our deliberations on the stem-cell issue unique was, precisely, the absence of that element. Bush knew that whatever his decision, it was bound to alienate millions of Americans. Their ranks would include both political supporters and many who, if the decision went another way, might be drawn to reconsider their aversion to him. Our discussions were focused throughout on reaching a coherent and consistent position where the President could stand with honor for as long as the facts on the ground remained as they were. We did not dwell at all on how that position would play politically.

In the coming decades, scientific advances will compel Presidents and politicians to confront vexing choices on subjects that were once solely the province of dystopian science fiction: human cloning, fetal farming, human-animal hybrid embryos, and situations as yet unimagined and unimaginable. If we are to benefit from the great promise of the age of biotechnology while preventing grave ethical abuses, we can only hope that future Presidents will be guided by the same seriousness with which George W. Bush pursued the question of stem-cell research, as well as by his stout refusal to be seduced by the siren song of political expediency.

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Is India an Ally?

Sadanand Dhume

LAST FALL, to mark the 60th year of national independence, the government of India and the Confederation of Indian Industry launched a public-relations blitz in New York to coincide with the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations. Glitzy society dinners, corporate powwows, giant screens in Times Square, and colorful advertisements at bus shelters and atop taxis flaunted the emblems of the new India: skinny supermodels, well-heeled shoppers, and hi-tech entrepreneurs.

It seems only yesterday that India was more likely to be associated with images of snake charmers in teeming bazaars and mendicants in squalid cities. If the old India brought to mind the leathern visage of Mother Teresa, for the new India it is the perfectly groomed Aishwarya Rai, a former Miss World. A country that once attracted Western charities and dharma bums now beckons to CEO's hoping to shore up the bottom line.

Perhaps nowhere is India's makeover more striking than in the realm of diplomatic relations with the West. Through most of the cold war, U.S.-India ties were frosty and often antagonistic. Today, it is hard to find an American political observer on either side of the ideological spectrum who is not favorably disposed to the new global player. In a 2006 article in *Foreign Affairs*, Ashton B. Carter, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy during the Clinton administration, hailed India as "a strategically located democratic country of growing economic importance" and endorsed the Bush administration's overtures to New Delhi. Henry Kissinger has said that "the geopolitical objectives of India . . . are quite parallel to ours." Christopher Hitchens, writing in the Manhattan Institute's *City Journal*, asserts that India is "crucial to our struggle against jihadism, as well as to our management of the balance of power with China." Charles Krauthammer has argued that the U.S. should make India a central ally and nominate it for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

The new regard for India has already borne fruit in the form of a landmark agreement on nuclear cooperation that was announced by President Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in July 2005. The deal gives India access to advanced civil nuclear technology that it has been denied since it first tested a nuclear weapon in 1974—this, despite New Delhi's refusal to sign the nuclear nonproliferation treaty or curb its nuclear-weapons program. Significantly, the amendment to U.S. law that made the agreement possible, the so-called Hyde Act, enjoyed overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress, with backers including Democrats like Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, and John

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Kerry and Republicans like John McCain, Tom Tancredo, and Rick Santorum.

Supporters of the deal point to a host of benefits for the U.S., the environment, and world peace. India, it is said, will buy American nuclear technology, cut its dependence on its notoriously polluting coal-fired power plants, and bring its existing civilian reactors under international safeguards. But the underlying rationale of the agreement remains geopolitical. Washington's calculation is that India's rise is both benign and in America's strategic interest. Hence, the reasoning goes, the U.S. ought to do what it can (in the words of Condoleezza Rice) "to help India become a major world power in the 21st century."

How firm is the foundation on which these hopes lie?

SINCE GAINING its independence from Britain in 1947, India has taken a largely parallel approach to economics on the one hand and international politics on the other. The country's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was a Brahmin and a Fabian Socialist with a patrician disdain for business. ("Profit," he once remarked, is a word "I consider dirty.") Enamored of the Soviet Union's experiment in state planning, Nehru harnessed his vision of modern India to state control of the economy's commanding heights. In 1955, his Congress party, which was to dominate parliament more or less uninterruptedly for a half-century, declared that "planning should take place with a view to the establishment of a socialistic pattern of society, where the principal means of production are under social ownership or control."

Analogously, in the parallel track of foreign policy, Nehru spearheaded the non-aligned movement (NAM): an alliance of third-world countries whose aim (as the 1979 Havana Declaration would later summarize) was to protect "the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security" of its members in their joint "struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, Zionism, and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, interference, or hegemony, as well as against great-power and bloc politics."

In theory, the NAM was intended to keep New Delhi independent of both Moscow and Washington. In practice, beginning with India's failure to condemn the Soviet Union's 1956 invasion of Hungary, both the movement's worldview and its rhetoric tilted conspicuously toward the Kremlin. This, along with the stark Dullesian division of the world into friend or foe, helps explain the frigid state of U.S.-India relations for many years, and the contrasting warmth of America's embrace of a much more pliant Pakistan.

The twin foundations laid by Nehru would only harden under his daughter, Indira Gandhi, who took office in 1966 and, apart from a three-year interregnum in the late 1970's, ruled until her assassination in 1984. Mrs. Gandhi nationalized banks, ratcheted up the highest marginal income-tax rate to 97.5 percent, and brought India's infamous license-permit regime—consisting of bureaucratic oversight of private business, production quotas, and price controls—to its zenith. These policies, no more successful in India than they proved anywhere else in the world, guaranteed more than two decades of stagnation and inspired the disparaging economic moniker, "Hindu rate of growth."

By the 1980's, the cumulative effects of Nehruvian socialism had become too glaring to ignore. If, in 1964 (the year Nehru died), India's per-capita income had been just over half that of South Korea, by 1984 the average South Korean was four times richer than the average Indian. Even Indonesia, an economic basket case in the 1960's, had comfortably overtaken India, a country where even the relatively well-to-do needed either connections or infinite patience or both to acquire such basic amenities as a telephone or a cooking-gas cylinder. Similarly on the foreign-policy front: by the mid-1980's, most East Asian nations had in effect seceded from the grouping of former colonies that India still presumed to lead.

IT WAS Indira Gandhi's son and successor, Rajiv Gandhi, who in the late 1980's took the first gingerly steps toward easing the government's grip on the economy. But only after Rajiv's own assassination did a new prime minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, initiate real change. In 1991, faced with a balance-of-payments crisis, Rao appointed the Oxford-educated technocrat Manmohan Singh, the current prime minister, as his finance minister. Singh proceeded to scrap most licensing programs, reduce tariffs, and open the door to foreign investment. Almost as if on cue, growth rates, exports, and foreign-exchange reserves began to rise.

Economic growth, however, failed to rejuvenate the electoral fortunes of the Congress party, which during the 1990's lost what had been a near-monopoly on both federal and provincial power. New regional and caste-based parties and, especially, a newly resurgent Hindu-nationalist movement spearheaded by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) claimed vote share from the steadily shrinking

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Congress. Between 1996 and 2004, India was ruled by three non-Congress prime ministers, including the BJP's Atal Behari Vajpayee (1998-2004), the only non-Congressman to serve a full term as prime minister.

Happily, this political turbulence has not stalled the economic dynamism set in motion by Singh. Between 1991 and 2006, per-capita income (in terms of purchasing-power parity) more than doubled from $1,400 to $3,800. The ranks of the middle class, broadly defined, have swelled to over 250 million people, by some measures the largest in the world. Today, more Indians buy cell phones each month than any other people.

The same story can be told on the corporate and macroeconomic level. Since liberalization, twelve Indian firms—spanning banking, pharmaceuticals, software, and services—have listed on the New York Stock Exchange, and three on the technology-heavy NASDAQ. Last year, Tata Steel, a leading private firm, finalized an $11.3-billion purchase of the Dutch steelmaker Corus. Overall, the economy expanded by a robust 9.4 percent in 2006, and foreign direct investment nearly tripled over the previous year to $16 billion. Foreign-exchange reserves stand at $230 billion.

Side by side with this opening-up of India's economy have come changes in attitudes toward the West. Indians today are among the most pro-American people in Asia. A recent Pew Center survey of "global attitudes" found that about six in ten Indians hold a favorable view of the United States. Correspondingly, both official and people-to-people ties between the two countries have advanced, helped no doubt by the cultural bridge-building of the prosperous community of Indian Americans, now some 2.5-million strong. In a gesture of great symbolic importance, India vocally supported the U.S.-backed government of Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan, pledging $750 million in aid for the fledgling democracy and undertaking to erect its new parliament building. Recently, the American and Indian navies joined together with their Australian and Singapore counterparts for five days of exercises off the Malabar coast, the first such joint activity of its kind.

It is on such robust particulars that the geopolitical "case" for India has been built. Here, we are reminded, is a fellow democracy, the world's largest, with an English-speaking elite and legal and political institutions shaped by nearly a century of experience as a British colony. Moreover, as a third-world country whose people are being lifted out of poverty without the heavy-handed aid of a benevolent dictatorship, India is living proof that democracy and the rule of law *work*, and its capitalist economy, free press, and cultural pluralism can serve as a beacon to other developing countries.

There is more. India's longstanding feud with Pakistan, and its experience with outbreaks of Muslim violence at home, are said to have given it a special sensitivity to the problem of radical Islam, something that Western countries have only recently awakened to. Home to the world's second-largest Muslim population, India offers an example to democracies struggling to integrate their own Muslims, and a rebuke to those who argue that democracy and Islam are incompatible. New Delhi's participation will thus be a vital component in any sustained international effort to bring order to the Muslim world at large.

Finally, India shares America's concerns about the rise of China, which sits on its northern and eastern borders, and with which it fought a short and sharp border war in 1962. India's million-man army, the world's fourth largest, and its blue-water navy make it a natural buffer as well as a sentinel on the trade route between East Asia and the Middle East. By the middle of the century, a demographically and economically vibrant India can serve as a counterweight not only to expanding Chinese influence in Southeast Asia but also to Beijing's great-power ambitions in other places around the globe.

Thus the good news. But there is another side to the balance sheet, beginning with the realities of India's economy. By the benchmark of its own past, India has indeed come a long way. But compared with the rest of the world it remains poor. In per-capita income, the World Bank ranks India 146th, between Syria and Georgia. The average Chinese, whose income was about equal to that of the average Indian two decades ago, is now more than twice as wealthy, and the gap is widening. With a female literacy rate of 46 percent, India lags behind Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia, Southeast Asia's poorest countries. It is at number 120 on the World Bank index that measures ease of doing business, and 72 on the corruption index maintained by Transparency International (an organization that combats graft).

In short, India is a long way from being an economic powerhouse, let alone the developed country of official fantasy. Unfortunately, it also manifests a dangerous inability (or unwillingness) to confront the economic mistakes of its past—thus

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raising the specter of their repetition. Congress-party leaders can hardly open their mouths without invoking the Nehru-Gandhis, and even the BJP has refrained from harsh characterization of their rule, including on the matter of their disastrous economic policies. Thus, while islands of the Indian economy are indisputably joining the digital age, much of the country's political vocabulary remains tethered to the bullock cart.

That, moreover, is where many of India's leading intellectuals would have it stay. Whatever the pace of its economic modernization, India has easily kept up with the West in producing its share of privileged devotees of the anti-globalization Left. Arundhati Roy, a Booker Prize-winning novelist, believes that telephone call centers are "part of the corporate culture, which is taking away land and resources and water from millions of rural people." (Never mind the myriads of jobs they have created.) In her 2004 collection of essays, *An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire*, she cautions India against cooperating with the U.S. in the war on terror, defined by her as "a superpower's self-destructive impulse toward supremacy, stranglehold, [and] global hegemony." In similar fashion, Vandana Shiva, a distinguished scientist and leading public intellectual, has been organizing protests against corporate expansion of the retail sector—apparently on the grounds that increased consumer choice represents a mortal threat to Indian national identity.

These and similar gestures of solidarity with the permanently underdeveloped world have had a baleful influence in politics. In the 2004 national election, the Congress party came back to power on a populist platform, asserting that the economic reforms had benefited only the rich.* After taking office, the new government dismantled the ministry that had been charged with privatizing state-owned enterprises. Then, summoning Indira Gandhi's ghost, it authored a law "guaranteeing" employment for adults in rural areas in a third of the country's districts. As in the past, the greatest beneficiaries of this boondoggle have been not the poor but corrupt local bureaucrats and contractors—which has not prevented the government from promising last September to extend the program nationwide. Meanwhile, much-needed reforms of practices ranging from antiquated labor laws to government subsidies for fuel and fertilizer remain stalled.

Such ghosts of the past lurk in foreign policy as well. Despite all the progress of recent years, it seems that India cannot shake the habit, cultivated over the decades of the cold war, of measuring its sovereignty in terms of opposition to the United States. Exhibit A in this regard is the agreement intended to operationalize nuclear cooperation. Although it arguably gives much to India while asking very little in return, parliamentary opposition to the deal has been surprisingly vigorous. The Communist parties on which the Congress party relies for its majority have threatened to topple the government if it presses ahead. Sensing political advantage, even the BJP, widely regarded as more pro-American than Congress, publicly opposes the deal. As for those Indians, mainly middle-class, who support the agreement, they do not vote.

Then there is the China question. Despite confident predictions that India will surpass the People's Republic, it is no less plausible that, twenty years from now, China's economic, military, and cultural heft will so dwarf India's that comparisons between the two countries will have become altogether meaningless. This, coupled with the demands of domestic politics, could cause India to slip back definitively into its historical comfort zone as an almost reflexively anti-Western power with an officially non-aligned policy—only this time calibrated to tiptoe around Beijing's sensitivities rather than Moscow's.

And on the opposite side geographically there is Iran. Officially, India opposes a nuclear-armed Iran; at the International Atomic Energy Agency, it has twice voted to refer the Islamic Republic to the UN Security Council. Still, the government's public statements remain equivocal, tending to emphasize Tehran's right to nuclear energy more than they do the threat of nuclear weapons in the hands of a theocratic regime. A clear-cut warning to the mullahs from a leader of the developing world might help rob the Iranians of their ability to frame the nuclear issue in terms of Islam versus the West. But even a hint of such a policy would lay the government open to the charge of craven surrender to Washington.

A MAJOR consideration here is, of course, the risk of riling India's 150-million-strong Muslim minority, among whom is the world's second-largest population of Shiites (after Iran).

Most Indian Muslims are peaceful, and the community contributes much to the fabric of national life—most visibly in sports, movies, and the arts. Nor is religious zealotry in India a Muslim mo-

* In fact, the number of people living below the poverty line declined from more than a third of the population to about a fifth, and India's *gini* coefficient, a standard measure of inequality, is lower than that of China or the U.S.

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nopoly. Nonetheless, the widely touted notion that Indian Islam is uniquely tolerant, or somehow immune to Islamist sentiment, does not bear scrutiny.

Unlike in Western democracies, Muslims in India are permitted by law to be governed by *shari'a* in civil matters like marriage, divorce, and inheritance. A consequence of this autonomy has been the development of parallel societies in ghettoized enclaves of the sort that today's Dutch, British, and French have begun scrambling to contain. Most of India's Muslim middle class emigrated to Pakistan at partition 60 years ago; in much of the community that remained, cultural markers of backwardness like high birthrates and an aversion to the education of females have persisted. As a result, Muslim literacy rates and incomes lag behind the national average.

The community has also given birth—via Deobandism, the subcontinental cousin of Wahhabism—to an outlook whose purest form is embodied in the Taliban. Moreover, Abul Ala Maududi, who along with the Egyptians Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al-Banna was one of the founders of modern Sunni Islamism, spent more of his life in India than in Pakistan, the country with which he is usually associated. It was in India that Maududi formulated and expounded many of his ideas about a society and state run strictly according to the dictates of *shari'a*. In a survey of Indian Muslims conducted by the U.S.-based Pakistani scholar Akbar Ahmed, a majority picked as their contemporary role models Maududi, the 19th-century Muslim supremacist Sayyed Ahmad Khan, and an influential Bombay-based cleric named Zakir Naik, who publicly praises Osama bin Laden and calls for all Indians to be governed by *shari'a*.

Not surprisingly, then, Indian Islam has not gone untouched by the jihadist trends in neighboring Pakistan and Bangladesh. Indeed, in recent years more civilians have been killed in India as a result of Islamic terror than in any other country aside from war-torn Afghanistan and Iraq. In October 2005, on the eve of the Hindu festival of Diwali, bombs in crowded marketplaces and on a public bus in Delhi claimed 62 lives. In 2006, a series of blasts on commuter trains killed 209 in Bombay. Last August, 42 people died in attacks on a restaurant and open-air auditorium in Hyderabad. Nor has the mayhem been confined to large cities. In March 2006, twin bombings killed fourteen people in the Hindu-temple town of Varanasi, and just last November another 13 people died in coordinated bombings in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh.

While the attacks have been plausibly blamed on groups like the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Toiba and Bangladesh's Harkat-ul Jihad-al-Islami, these movements do not appear to have had much trouble recruiting accomplices from among their co-religionists in India. Western observers like the *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman are fond of pointing to a supposed lack of Indian-Muslim involvement in international terrorism—a bromide that should have been put to rest by the revelation that Indian doctors played a significant role in last year's failed attacks in London and Glasgow.

In this realm, the arrangement of Indian politics is a recipe for paralysis. Muslims are believed to vote as a bloc—a notion that, whether true or not, gives them enormous influence in a fragmented polity with a first-past-the-post electoral system where 35 percent of the vote often ensures victory. Since Muslims constitute upward of 20 percent of the electorate in about 80 parliamentary constituencies, and at least 15 percent in another 40 or so, a large turnout of Muslim voters is often decisive.

The consequences can be seen in a number of recent developments. In 2004, a leading candidate for public office in the northern state of Bihar enlisted the help of a bin Laden look-alike to campaign for Muslim votes. (The candidate won and is now a federal minister.) Two years later, a minister in the government of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, offered a reward of $11 million for anyone who would behead the Danish cartoonists responsible for "disrespectful" drawings of the prophet Muhammad. In Hyderabad, parts of which are Muslim strongholds, three sitting legislators of a local Islamic party recently roughed up Taslima Nasreen, a Bangladeshi author who has been critical of her country's treatment of its Hindu minority and Islam's treatment of women. In November the army had to be called in to quell rioters in Calcutta whose demands included Nasreen's expulsion from India. A leading Muslim politician in the southern state of Kerala is a declared Islamist who spent nine years in prison for his role in a 1998 terrorist attack that killed 46 people. And so forth.

And yet, despite all this, most Indian leftists and secularists persist in the belief that the primary threat to the country's secular fabric remains Hindu nationalism. This may have been a sensible posture 60 years ago, when a newly independent India sought to reassure its Muslims that they would live as equals in a Hindu-majority country. But by now, and notwithstanding the occasional excesses by Hindu militants that have

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rightly been condemned, it has descended to the level of farce. A recent, much ballyhooed government report on the socioeconomic situation of Indian Muslims sought to explain away the statistics on entrenched Muslim poverty and educational and professional underachievement by pointing to an alleged "six decades of institutional neglect and bias." It then recommended measures—like preferential discrimination and quotas for government jobs—more likely to perpetuate than to erase the sense of separateness, and the refusal to abandon outmoded customs, that lie at the root of the problem.

As in Europe, Indian Muslim groups and leftists have begun to band together. In the massive protests that greeted President Bush's visit to India in 2006, leftist icons like Arundhati Roy provided the star power, Communists the organization, and Muslims the numbers. Bush, despite having done more for India than any other U.S. President in terms of trade and security cooperation, was denied the honor of addressing parliament, and had to make do with a speech in the shadow of an old fort that houses the national zoo.

Another target of agitation is Israel, one of India's most steadfast friends since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992 and currently its second-largest supplier of arms. During the 2006 conflict with Hizballah in southern Lebanon, a Communist member of parliament denounced Israel's military actions as "genocide"; the body ended up passing a one-sided resolution condemning the "large-scale and indiscriminate Israeli bombing of Lebanon."

The long-term prospects for a deeper alliance among Communists, left-leaning parties, and Muslims threatened by globalization are too stark to be ignored. Of the six states in which the Muslim population is above the national average of 14 percent, five are located in the densely populated northern and eastern regions that have been largely untouched by rising living standards in the coastal states of the south and west. The two states of Kerala and West Bengal, each of which is about 25-percent Muslim, are also Communist strongholds.

THE RAPPROCHEMENT between India and America has been one of the most striking outgrowths of the end of the cold war. India has come a long way since the early 1990's. It boasts an energetic middle class, a clutch of world-class companies, and an increasingly influential diaspora. The country's sheer size—by population the equivalent of 40 Malaysias or more than twelve Egypts—means that even modest advances at home will ripple across Asia and the globe.

But the jury remains out on the longer term. Until India is able to view itself and its history dispassionately, reject the twin failures of socialism and non-alignment, modernize its Muslim citizens and bring their aspirations in line with those of the Hindu majority, it will likely remain an underachiever—and, for the U.S. and the West, an uncertain friend.

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After the Art Wars

Michael J. Lewis

For a brief and amusing interval in 2002 I was a candidate for the position of chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Amusing, for there was never the slightest chance of my being chosen. This was inadvertently made clear by the first question during my interview in the East Wing of the White House. After the preliminary niceties, I was asked to sketch my life and accomplishments. "Of course," my interviewer prompted helpfully, "we all know about your music."

Ah yes, my music. Either she was referring to a certain defunct college band, suggesting background checks of shocking omniscience, or more likely she had taken me for the distinguished Welsh composer of film music. At that instant I knew that we were only going through the motions, and that a presumptive nominee was already waiting in the wings. And so he was. That September, Dana Gioia, a translator and poet of considerable distinction, was appointed chairman of the NEA.

To some, the choice may have seemed surprising; poetry is hardly the main channel of contemporary art. Yet it was understandable politically. Literacy had been a favorite theme of the Bush administration, and something of a personal crusade for the First Lady. One could glimpse her hand in the choice of Gioia. But one could also glimpse something else: the lingering aftershocks of the case of the "NEA Four."

These were the four performance artists whose grants had been withdrawn in 1990 on the grounds of obscenity—an incident that triggered a harsh and protracted cultural battle that nearly destroyed the agency. The battle had been politically bruising to the first President Bush, and the second wished no reprise of it. Steering well clear of the visual arts—the grounds on which the "art wars" of the 1970's and 80's had been fought—he chose as non-controversial a chairman as could be imagined. And indeed Gioia's chairmanship has been notable for its calm, as well as for such undeniably praiseworthy achievements as bringing Shakespeare and jazz performances to high-school students.

It is not only Republicans who have nervously shied away from the visual arts in recent decades. President Clinton, although elected with the rapturous and near unanimous support of the American art world, did much the same. His first NEA chairman was Jane Alexander, the well-known theater and television actress, and his second Bill Ivey, the head of the Country Music Association—each a safe populist choice.

It seems, then, that both Republicans and Democrats had learned the same lesson from the art wars: entanglement with the visual arts could do them no political good, and quite possibly much harm. Whichever party claims the presidency a year from now, this political calculus is unlikely to

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change. Can anyone believe that a President Hillary Clinton would be any more eager than a President Rudolph Giuliani to be linked publicly to a performance artist like Karen Finley, whose chocolate-dipped nudity made her the most memorable of the NEA Four?

What this means, however, is that the NEA has become a very different entity from what was once envisioned. At its founding in 1965, President Lyndon Johnson declared: "There is a quality in art which speaks across the gulf dividing man from man and nation from nation, and century from century. . . . The stakes may well be the survival of civilization." Today the stakes are lower: last year, Gioia informed Congress that the NEA had "set itself the goal of delivering a direct grant to every congressional district in the United States."

In brief, the NEA has withered in a matter of decades from a self-styled instrument of world peace to a cautious dispenser of largesse whose one inflexible principle is that no grant must ever redound to the administration's embarrassment. Whether it can regain its early ambition—or whether it should try to—is an open question. But nobody contemplating a reform of this institution should begin without a clear and unsentimental understanding of America's peculiarly fitful relationship to the arts, particularly the visual arts.

THE NEA is a many-splendored thing. To be precise, six things: music, theater, dance, literature, education, and the visual arts. Of these six separate programs, only the last has aroused serious controversy. This is only partly because the visual arts are, literally, visible. After all, the performing arts—music, theater, and dance—can similarly succeed in provoking their audiences to paroxysms of indignation. But the events they create are ephemeral, and their audiences usually comprise increments numbering only in the hundreds. Moreover, insofar as they draw from an existing canon of works, the performing arts exist usually at some remove from the contentious issues of the day. As for literature, it is largely experienced on an individual basis and is perhaps the least public of the arts.

By contrast, visual art has an extraordinary capacity to stir emotions at a collective level, and with a single provocative image. The image can be Joe Rosenthal's photograph of the flag-raising at Iwo Jima in World War II, or Andres Serrano's photo of a crucifix immersed in a jar of urine. Whatever the message, the medium can command public attention with an immediacy and urgency granted to no other art.

It is true that, throughout much of American history, the visual arts lived a stunted and somewhat faltering existence. Often pointed to in this connection are the absence of aristocratic patronage, of great collections, or of opportunities for artistic training. And there was also, from the very beginning, a deep and abiding suspicion of the visual arts, a suspicion deriving ultimately from the Second Commandment and its injunction against graven images. This attitude created the visually parched space of the Puritan meeting house, where congregants—guarded against any taint of papist idolatry—might listen without distraction to the sermon preached by the minister. Such sermons, running in their 17th-century form to several hours, and closing with a moral charge to the congregation, comprised early America's primal aesthetic experience, an experience that was in fact not visual but verbal.

Strangely, or perhaps not so strangely, the same impulse still conditions the way we understand art—the impulse, that is, to think of art as justified by the lesson it imparts rather than the pleasure it gives. This essentially utilitarian or instrumental view has served over the centuries to validate all kinds of artistic production, from Hudson River School naturalism to New Deal realism. One can see its force today when, for example, an NEA spokesman claims there is "plenty of proof that arts funding affects quality-of-life issues, including helping to prevent youth crime."

The only period when the utilitarian view of art was consciously suppressed was from the late 1930's to the mid-1960's. This was the era of formalism, according to whose tenets any superadded political or didactic content in art was proscribed as a form of "kitsch" (in the judgment of the influential Clement Greenberg). But the heyday of formalism was brief, and in the long arc of American art something of an aberration. Fatefully, it was in this same fleeting and aberrant moment that the NEA was founded, with consequences we shall return to.

NOT THAT the idea of a federal role in the arts was itself an aberration, or as great an aberration as is often claimed. Despite the lack of a deeply rooted culture of patronage, the federal government was inevitably compelled to make art—in the form of coins, monuments, and buildings. Especially buildings: post offices and customs houses, prisons and courthouses, arsenals, hospitals, and mints, many of them embellished with monumental statuary, allegorical paintings, and

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other works of decorative art. These government buildings, however, were regularly paid for through appropriations bills. This meant that their artistic patronage, for better or worse, came under the bailiwick of the Treasury, whose supervising architect (a position created in 1852) handled the commissions. The result is the solidly but predictably conventional work that is the mark of federal architecture.

How different this was from the case of France, where, from the time of Louis XIV, the arts were consciously employed as a matter of state policy and, successively, of royal and then national identity. In this capacity, the academies and collections established by Louis have survived under democracy and dictatorship, monarchy and empire, into our day. When an American sighs for enlightened government patronage of the arts, it is this model, whether he knows it or not, he is imagining.

To pine, however, for an American version of France's enlightened cultural politics—and to think that it might be summoned forth simply by creating a grant-giving agency and furnishing it with a princely budget—is to misunderstand the complex organic relationship between the state and the art world that developed historically in France. The French government was never in the business of issuing blank checks to artists. The aspiring painters and architects who trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts followed a rigorous system that groomed them for state employment. In the 19th century, the academicians evaluating student work and awarding the all-important Rome Prize formed a kind of supreme court of aesthetics and, fittingly, were appointed for life.

This helps explain the high standards of French academic art—a result of fierce competition within a very limited stylistic range—but also its essential conservatism. In the meantime, many of what we regard as the fundamental achievements of French art took place outside this elaborate edifice and in deliberate opposition to it. The price of state-supported art, after all, is state art.

A model much closer to the experience of the United States was that of 17th-century Holland, a mercantile republic that sustained an extraordinarily buoyant and vigorous artistic culture entirely through private collectors. America's most important patrons, similarly, emerged out of the mercantile tradition, and specifically from the ranks of the great industrial magnates of the Gilded Age. Enjoying the unprecedented wealth that steel, railroad, and oil monopolies provided, these men entered into the acquisition of art with the same determined single-mindedness that brought them business success. America's major public collections are in significant measure due to the purchases and bequests of the Frick, Vanderbilt, Getty, Rockefeller, and other industrialist families. Even the National Gallery was essentially a private bequest, created by Andrew Mellon and filled with the Rembrandts collected by traction magnate Peter A.B. Widener.

In this one respect, America's artistic culture does resemble that of France: it, too, is the complex product of a lengthy historical process, with its own characteristic strengths and weaknesses and its own characteristic pattern of triumphs and debacles.

The Great Depression acted to discredit the industrial tycoons who formed America's great public collections. As artistic patronage by plutocracy no longer seemed quite so desirable, attempts were mounted to make the federal government a player. A congressional bill was introduced in 1937 to establish a "Bureau of Fine Arts," an initiative that faltered and was revived in various incarnations over the ensuing decades. Not until 1965, with LBJ's Great Society program, did the idea finally bear fruit. In that year the National Endowment for the Arts was established (along with a parallel National Endowment for the Humanities), giving America its long-deferred opportunity to shape a national cultural policy.

And this the NEA tried to do. Although its budget was fairly modest, just over $7.5 million, it moved with remarkable dispatch. Within a year, it had awarded grants to 22 institutions and 135 individual artists, and helped to establish the American Film Institute. The operation was also quite lean, awarding $16.00 in grants for every dollar spent on administration.

In these early years, the grant recipients were eminently deserving. They included the Martha Graham dance company; Tony Smith, a minimalist sculptor; Edward Ruscha, a Pop artist and maker of artists' books; and Daniel Flavin, a pioneer of the use of light as a sculptural material. While the work of the recipients would not be to everyone's taste, they represented an irreproachable selection of promising young artists at a critical moment in their careers.

The organization would not stay lean for long. In the Nixon administration, it expanded by a factor of eight, a calculated diversion (so cynics claimed) from the woes of Vietnam. But more serious was a change in the art world itself that in turn transformed the relationship between art and the public.

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Within a few years of the founding of the NEA, the doctrine of formalism, which had insulated art from any sort of didactic program and instituted a kind of *cordon sanitaire* between art and politics, collapsed utterly. The Vietnam war, the international upheavals of 1968, the rise of the New Left and the counterculture—all these suggested to many artists that a detached apolitical stance was no longer tenable, and was in fact immoral. In 1939, when it was first formulated, Clement Greenberg's proscription of kitsch may have been heady stuff to young artists, liberating them from the pieties of social realism, but their successors three decades later were more likely to be enchanted by the bracing mini-manifesto painted on a Paris wall: "The most beautiful sculpture is a paving stone thrown at a cop's head."

By the mid-1980's, the American art world had turned fiercely hostile to formalism. The extreme and rapid politicization of art that took its place was the consequence of a number of developments, including the decline in the importance of painting, the corresponding rise of performance art, the emergence of identity politics and of a highly political feminism, and, perhaps most important of all, the AIDS epidemic, whose victims included a disproportionate number of artists. It was against this background that Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ* was created, a photograph showing a plastic crucifix suspended in a jar of the artist's urine.

The 1989 revelation that NEA funds had been used to pay for an exhibition of Serrano's work can be regarded as a pivotal moment in the art wars. At about the same time, much attention also focused on Robert Mapplethorpe's photograph of a man urinating into the mouth of another man and on Ron Athey's "Four Scenes in a Harsh Life," a performance in which the artist sliced into the back of a man suffering from AIDS, blotted the cuts with towels, and appeared to hoist them over the audience. In both instances NEA support was similarly at play, and although the subsidies were trifling in terms of dollars, they were tax dollars nevertheless. The American public, generally indifferent to the arts, now began to take a hard look, and did not like what it saw.

IN A MAY 1990 article in COMMENTARY, "Backward & Downward with the Arts," Samuel Lipman, the magazine's music critic and a long-time member of the NEA's advisory council, described the peculiar plight of the agency. On the one hand, there was the absolute lack of any coherent national policy: "though we spend public money, the purposes for which it is spent are random, aimless as to desired outcome, and subject to no accountability as to either expenditure or result." On the other hand, there was policy by default—that of promoting cutting-edge art, which was inevitably distinguished not by the "artistic achievement it has displayed but by its extra-artistic, social content." This last feature may have been compatible with a long-standing American attitude toward art, as I have noted, but the difference was that now American taxpayers were being required to subsidize both the art and its extra-artistic content.

Under congressional pressure led by Senator Jesse Helms—who regarded the outright abolition of the NEA as something of a sacred duty—the agency reluctantly instituted a series of reforms, at first requiring grant applicants to sign a document that they would not produce obscene works and then eliminating entirely the program of grants to individual artists. These acts predictably enraged the art community, but at the same time they considerably defused the political pressure to do something more drastic about the NEA. Thus, during the early 1990's, the controversy relaxed, so much so that the Republicans' 1994 "Contract with America" did not even mention the NEA (or culture in general).

Indeed, although the election of Bill Clinton in 1992 had delighted supporters of the arts who assumed that he would be a staunch defender of the agency, their confidence was somewhat misplaced. His naming of Jane Alexander as chairman was a shrewd political move; herself an artist, she was also a charming and personable woman who could elicit greater public sympathy than would a combative champion of free speech. But her job was to strip the NEA of any radical taint, and for this, as her inadvertently revealing memoir shows (*Command Performance: An Actress in the Theater of Politics*), her earnest ineptitude made her the right person. Apart from the occasional slip—a lesbian artist in Santa Monica used NEA funding to perform "Sex with Newt Gingrich's Mother"—Alexander charmed enough congressmen to take the wind out of the sails of the agency's more extreme opponents. Nevertheless, the Republican majority in both houses managed to put through a punitive cut of the $162-million budget by 40 percent and a reduction of its staff from 279 to 148. (In recent years, the budget has slowly crept up, but it still remains well below its 1992 peak.)

If, moreover, Alexander's foxhole strategy ultimately saved the agency, her victory was achieved at the cost of dumbing it down, or perhaps I should say dumbing it down further. In *Partisan Review*,

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Edith Kurzweil lamented that Alexander had turned the NEA into "the National Endowment for the Arts and Crafts." But in fact the NEA had long since ceased being an instrument for discerning artistic excellence, if it ever had been. As Joseph Epstein, like Lipman a veteran of the NEA's advisory council, would report in Commentary ("What to Do About the Arts," April 1995), aesthetic concerns seemed no more welcome at the NEA than in a 17th-century Puritan meeting house:

> Mediocrity, the question of what may be called quality control, was rarely discussed during my time at the NEA. It could not be. Most NEA panelists believed in encouraging the putatively disadvantaged more than they believed in art itself, and this made them prey to the grim logic of affirmative action. . . . Add to this the assumption that artists themselves were members of a downtrodden minority group, as "entitled" to their grants as other supposed victims. And then toss in plain old-fashioned politics in the form of congressmen and members of the council who wanted to make sure that, say, Florida and Colorado got their share of grants. What we had was a fine recipe for spreading artistic mediocrity across the country.

Tellingly, neither the arts community itself nor its liberal constituency has ever defended the NEA on grounds of aesthetic merit. The arguments made on its behalf invariably boil down to a simple proposition: what is good for the arts community—that is, those who make art, exhibit it, and write about it—is perforce good for art. But is it? Operating on a similar principle, the Dutch government in the 1950's began vigorously buying up works of art as a form of social welfare, making its purchases on the basis of an artist's financial status rather than the quality of his work. In theory there should have been no limit to so enlightened a policy; but there was. In 1991, its warehouses filled to capacity, the government ran out of space, and had to undertake the embarrassing task of selling or giving away 215,000 unwanted sculptures, paintings, and prints.

The lesson should be obvious enough: superior works of art cannot be summoned on command, and certainly not by committees. Some years ago the cultural critic Camille Paglia proposed the establishment of a national endowment for rock and roll—an indigenous form of American art that was, she argued, as influential on the international scene as jazz music and whose contemporary creators were therefore by definition worthy of government support and encouragement. But Paglia's piece, which appeared in the *New York Times*, showed precisely why such national endowments will always flounder when it comes to the production of new art.

Whatever one thinks of American rock and roll as an art form, its emergence in the 1950's benefited from a concatenation of large social forces: the prosperity of the period, the northward migration of rural Southern blacks in previous decades, the social liberation made possible by the automobile, the relaxed mores of a postwar culture. The alignment of these forces with artistic ideas gave a peculiar urgency to the new popular music, but when the forces petered out over the next two decades, the music ceased to be so resonant (which may be why my students still listen to the rock and roll of the 1960's). At no step in this process could government intervention have helped; can one imagine Elvis Presley applying for a grant, or getting one?

One might object that rock and roll is hardly great art; but the story of American jazz is much the same, a story of large social and cultural forces converging at a single point. As with rock and roll, it is difficult to imagine how government guidance might have accelerated the process that resulted in jazz music, but quite easy to see how it might have hindered it, if only by bestowing upon jazz the unwarranted status of officially sanctioned art. In the end, energetic government support of new art will tend only to magnify already existing tendencies and ignore the truly innovative ones (much as the official French art apparatus ignored Impressionism in its day).

This is not to say that government support does harm across the board. The question always is: support for what? In the case of the performing arts, which depend on an unbroken living tradition that is passed on collectively, it can do much good. The audiences for music and dance have long been graying (perhaps whitening is now the better term), and there is much concern that they will vanish within a generation's time. Here, the role of the NEA would not be to create but rather to preserve or, if it comes to that, to "cocoon" art by means of a holding action: for instance, subsidizing classical orchestras and ballet companies so as to maintain a cadre of professionals who will keep alive what would otherwise become a dead language. As it happens, this is precisely the area where the NEA record has historically been brightest.

Another proper area of public action is the pre-

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cipitous decline in recreational reading on the part of young Americans, a decline with not only cultural ramifications but ominous practical ones—including the future ability of the American labor force to read and write reports, interpret instructions, and analyze problems verbally. Even at the risk of falling prey to an instrumental view of the arts, one would do well to support the NEA's recent focus on studying the condition of American literacy and instituting programs for advancing it.

For obvious political reasons, the NEA is not about to be abolished in the near future. That being the case, why should it not devote itself to those things that it can do—and remove itself from those activities, like choosing which trends to embrace in contemporary art, in which it is unfit to judge?

To be sure, the NEA no longer provides direct grants to contemporary artists, and now supports them only indirectly, insulated by several layers of bureaucracy. But this further increases administrative costs and diminishes the percentage of the NEA budget that actually reaches performers and artists. A better solution would be a blanket decision to support no contemporary work whatsoever. Something like that was behind William F. Buckley, Jr.'s proposal in 1989 that no NEA funds go toward subsidizing "any putative work of art under 50 years old." This, Buckley explained, "would distinguish the Rodins from the Mapplethorpes."

Perhaps in 50 years we will come to recognize Mapplethorpe as a Rodin; perhaps not. In either case, the 50-year rule would permit the dust and clutter of current events to settle, and in the meantime enable the NEA better to steward America's artistic patrimony by supporting museums, exhibitions, and performances of works validated by the cumulative consensus of time. This alone could help mend the breach between the American public and its arts community, not to mention the tragic and unnecessary division of Right and Left over what should properly be the legacy of us all.

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How Not to Remember & How Not to Forget

Ruth R. Wisse

"Do you know how my father would try out a new pen?" the Jewish Communist in Warsaw asked her American visitor in the early 1970's. "My father was a pious man, so he would dip the nib in ink, write 'Amalek' in Hebrew on a sheet of paper, then cross it out with a single black stroke."

This was how traditional Jews settled historical scores with their enemies—biblical Amalek being the tribe that attacked the weak rear guard of the Israelites on their flight from Egypt. But the daughter's point was that "history" teaches only what we are already inclined to learn from it, and that Jews had not yet drawn the right conclusions from theirs. Her father's symbolic strike at injustice had not prepared his generation for a century of real Amaleks. For her own part, she thought, she had perhaps done even worse in responding to the challenge of World War II and the Holocaust by staying on in Poland to help build a Workers' International.

My own family arrived in Montreal in 1940, but I think of this woman's cautionary words whenever people talk of memorializing Hitler's war against the Jews. It is not an easy subject. By 1993, when my husband and I left Montreal for Cambridge, Massachusetts, the last remaining saleswomen with tattooed numbers on their arms were gone from the Jewish bakery we used to frequent. In their place had arisen museums, archives, and research centers to confirm through historical reconstruction what we could no longer see recorded in flesh and blood. Jews were now in the peculiar position of having to conserve the evidence of their mass extinction. How should one go about documenting such ignominy? And what could one hope to salvage from the effort?

In its time, Hitler's war against the Jews had penetrated my parents' house in the form of thin bluish airmail letters that I would find my mother holding when I came home from school. My parents never disclosed their contents to me, except through the atmosphere they cast. It was Father's habit to smile at the worst of news, Mother's to lash out physically at the nearest available target. Much as I hated being slapped, I preferred the heat of Mother's hand to Father's eerie sorrow.

Even before he learned that his own father had died or been killed in the Bialystok ghetto, Father blamed himself for having abandoned the man whose authority he had defied when he left home at the age of fourteen. His older sister Pola, or Perele, had stayed behind to care for their father. Her fate along with that of her husband and their two children—Hela, eleven, and Ada, my age—remains unknown. Of the four Roskies brothers who exited safely to Montreal in 1939 and 1940, I believe that my father, the youngest of them, assumed

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the lion's share of guilt over having left their father and sister to perish.

To put things in perspective: I was born in 1936 in Czernowitz, then Romania, during the turbulent rule of King Carol II. My father, an impecunious engineer, had arrived in Czernowitz from Poland several years earlier. Building the first rubber factory in the region turned him briefly into a wealthy man and garnered a medal from the king. Taking the measure of the times, he used that medal in June 1940 to gain exit visas for himself, my mother, my older brother Ben, and me. He carried our group passport photo, taken in Bucharest, in his wallet until the day he died.

Our adventures crossing Europe pale in comparison with the experience of those who stayed behind longer on the continent (although Ben would be haunted by the memory of tense confrontations at consulates and frontiers). We landed in New York via a Greek ship that was torpedoed and sunk on its return voyage. On October 19, we arrived safely in Montreal. My brother, father, and mother—they would die in that order, at the ages of forty-three, seventy, and ninety-four respectively—are buried in the Montreal Jewish cemetery on Rue de la Savanne. The names of Mother's unburied siblings and their families are inscribed on the back of her tombstone.

The nature of Mother's relation to the information she received in those letters from and about members of her very extensive family came home to me only about 50 years later, when I was traveling through Lithuania with a group of professors from the Hebrew University. We had spent the day in Kovno (Kaunas), visiting, among other sites, the fortress where many of the city's 40,000 Jews had been tortured and killed. It was now about 10 o'clock at night—seven hours later than in Montreal and thus a perfect time to reach my mother at home.

"Do you know where I am, *mamele*?" I asked in Yiddish. Though our group was headed for her native Vilna, I had thought it safer to call from the nearby city where her favorite sister Anushka had lived. "*Ikh bin in Kovne*," I said.

On the tree-lined boulevard from where I was calling, people sat in cafés or strolled at leisure. A couple was playing with their dog opposite the phone booth. I told Mother we had arrived in the morning and were departing around noon the following day. "Will you drop in on Anushka?" she asked. Such was the matter-of-factness of her question that I consulted my watch before answering, "Not right now. I think it's too late."

So help me, at that moment I meant nothing more than that it was too late in the evening to drop in unannounced. So firmly alive had Mother kept the murdered members of her family that I was quite prepared to pay them a visit. If she had not grieved like Father, it was because she had never accepted that the Jews of Vilna and Kovno were dead.

For his part, Father rarely spoke to us of his past. Four days of the week he spent among his brothers and two of his nephews at the out-of-town factory they ran together as a family business. Twice a week he stayed over there with his brother Enoch. Perhaps they nursed their grief together in the hotel room they shared, for the two were very close: even away from the factory, they spoke daily on the telephone. It was about these calls that Mother told the joke about two female Russian revolutionaries who had served their ten-year sentences together in the same Lubyanka cell. On the day of their release, they begin to go their separate ways. Suddenly, one of them turns back and calls out, "Yentl, wait! Wait! I forgot to tell you something!" I loved this joke, but Mother told it with a dose of resentment over the missing Yentls in her own life. The loss of Anushka and all the others made Father's attachment to his sibling the more painful.

IN OUR home, the war was known only as the war, *di milkhome*. *Khurbn*, the Yiddish/Hebrew word for destruction (and specifically for the ancient Roman destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem), and *shoah*, holocaust, must have come in later, through postwar literature and commemoration. About Canada's role in the war I knew very little, though I remember an air-raid exercise when our parents drew the blinds and turned off the lights. Much later I learned that Jews had also served and fallen in the Canadian armed forces overseas. But, as recent immigrants to Canada, ours was a different war. In it, our side was unequivocally defeated.

I recall no celebrations on VE Day or VJ Day. Instead, my most memorable day in 1945 was April 12. I was standing on the outdoor balcony of our home when our landlord's daughter came running down the street shouting, "President Roosevelt is dead!" My parents were inside, and I could tell from the regular hum of their conversation that they were innocent of this great occurrence. I entered, elated with the importance of my message: "President Roosevelt is dead! President Roosevelt is dead!" Father hit me across the face.

That was only the second time he had ever struck me. The first was at age five when, running ahead of him and across the street at twilight, I nar-

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rowly avoided being hit by a car. He waited until we were home, set me across his lap, and spanked me through my winter clothing. This time I think I realized that he was the one out of control. I didn't cry. Father, impetuous! Had the slap come from Mother I would have smarted at the injustice, but father's uncharacteristic and misplaced eruption of shock made me proud of having caused it.

I don't think I lacked for anything during the war years. I remember no rationing, or even any admonitions to finish my cereal because of the starving children in Europe. In summertime my brother and I were sent from city to camp in the countryside, ostensibly to protect us from the threat of polio. What I seemed to lack was parents. They were always preoccupied, if not by the war then by the arrival of my baby sister Eva in November 1942, just before Rommel's defeat at El Alamein (they considered naming her Victoria) and later by my brother David's birth in the same year as the birth of the state of Israel.

One of our parents' friends later told me that I moped when they brought my sister home from the hospital. If I did, I soon got over it. Far from resenting my parents' distractedness, I greatly enjoyed my independence. If I needed to know something, I turned to my older brother Ben, who anyway understood things, including English, much better than they did. It never occurred to me to consult Mother or Father on anything of importance. When it suited me, I told them what I was up to. Most of the time I did as I thought best.

That was during the war. After the war, the arrival in Montreal of refugees impressed on us just how lucky we had been.

In our home, "survivors" were usually "*Vilner*." Some of them my parents had actually known in Vilna (Wilno to the Poles, Vilnius to Lithuanians). One had been Mother's former schoolmate, another her brother's best friend, a third Father's lab partner at Stefan Batory University. Before moving to Czernowitz, father had lived and studied in Vilna for a decade, gaining his master's degree in chemical engineering. Though he and Mother thus had many friends in common, she also remembered neighbors and classmates from earliest childhood.

The postwar trickle of *Vilner* never let up. One day in the 1960's, dropping in on Mother, I found her so absorbed in conversation that she barely took time to introduce me to the stranger at the table: a woman about her age speaking an identical brand of Yiddish. This, I later learned, was a high-school classmate of Mother's whose son had settled in Montreal. She herself had moved to Belgium with her husband before the war, in its aftermath had converted together with him to Catholicism, and had baptized her son into the same faith.

I will leave it to this woman's family to tell her story if they wish; what is relevant to mine is my mother's longstanding and singular aversion to apostates from Judaism—the only human category (apart from Nazis) she ever condemned outright. But when I asked why she put aside her principles in this case, she seemed surprised: "What do you know, child, about the trials this *yidishe tokhter* had to endure?" Any survivor from Vilna was a "daughter of the Jewish people," fully entitled to Mother's protection, and all rules bent when it came to these envoys from the past.

Is it any wonder that I found such people more vivid than ordinary mortals? One day at our dining-room table, another former *Vilner*, Mrs. D., told the story of how her husband had "proposed" to her at Dachau concentration camp several days after its liberation in 1945. They had known each other back in Vilna, and had renewed contact across the barbed wire separating the men's and women's camps. Each, I believe, had lost a spouse in the interim. At the first opportunity after the Americans took charge, Mrs. D. had managed to find a tub and some soap, and sat herself down outside to scrub her clothes. Every time she immersed her hands in the water, they came up blacker with lice and dirt. Suddenly a man came up behind her and ran his finger down her arm, wiping away the dirt. Like this—looking across at her husband, Mrs. D. demonstrated just how he did it and how he then kissed the place he had wiped clean. An ideal of romance was shaped for me by this large, middle-aged man sitting impassively sipping his tea. About this couple I never asked myself, as I did about our parents' other friends, whether I cared for them personally. They were larger than life, more important than literature.

I pretty much extended this credit to anyone who had spent the war on "the other side," even to the teachers assigned to us in the Jewish day school I attended regularly through seventh grade and in afternoon classes for three years thereafter. Nearly all I remember of my formal schooling are the answers I occasionally got wrong. But much else of consequence seeped through these teachers' lessons: their willingness to be among children after having sometimes lost their own; their respect for the Jewish subjects they taught despite the price they had paid for having been born Jews; the range of their knowledge, which seemed inseparable from their

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experience. I am especially thankful that they never alluded to that experience, since I have always thought it wrong to teach young children about the destruction of the Jews of Europe unless and until they are first thoroughly informed about the staying power of Jewish civilization. That these survivors of the war against the Jews were prepared to instruct us in that civilization helped to convince me of its worth.

FROM ABOUT the age of twelve through sixteen, I studied elocution and acted in children's theater, reaching my peak as Jo in *Little Women* and the witch in *Hansel and Gretel*. For most of that time I thought of becoming an actress, and I attended as much theater as I could. But nothing I saw on stage remotely competed in dramatic intensity with the memorial assemblies I went to with my parents: commemorations organized for the dead of Vilna and its surrounding region and larger, community-wide ceremonies on the anniversary of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto. Through early spring, people wore heavy overcoats to these gatherings, reminding me of the ghetto round-ups whose images were becoming as familiar to me as my own face in the mirror.

It took forever for the participants at such meetings to settle down. Finally, the chairman would set a somber tone, calling everyone to order. A cantor intoned the *El moleh rahamim*, the traditional prayer for the dead. But the restiveness would continue during the talk by the event's featured speaker, who rarely met with everyone's satisfaction. Anguished cries of "*Nekomeh!*"—Revenge!—interrupted any who counseled putting the worst behind us. Cries of "Shame!" answered those calling for vindictiveness.

My heart went out to the lonely few who shouted for revenge, although God only knows what means they had in mind. The biblical plagues that rained down on Pharaoh? Blood, frogs, vermin . . . the death of Germany's firstborn? Their cries in the hall seemed to me as futile as the prayers of their doomed relatives on the way to execution. Still, given Mother's temperament, I would have expected her to share their view. She was a good hater, and knew how to bear a grudge. Yet one day, when I asked after a friend of hers who had not been seen for some time, she said scornfully, "G.! After the war he tracked and killed the man who murdered his family!"

I was astounded. Mr. G.! This curious little man, so much slighter than his wife, who hardly uttered a word during their visits to our home? Mr. G., an avenger? And why did this amazing fact not *raise* him in Mother's estimation? I was so exasperated by her sour judgment that I neglected to press for details, forfeiting the chance to learn how he had gone about his deed.

I think now that Mother had merely absorbed the conventional Jewish postwar wisdom, which was that it was more important to ensure the future than to squander energy on acts of reprisal. And despite my own sympathy for those yearning to settle scores with mass murderers, I, too, must have shared that conventional view. It was a matter of priorities—build or destroy. At those postwar assemblies, though people wept openly, and the hovering spirits of the dead seemed to force the air out of the jammed auditorium, by the time we rose for the singing of the final anthems you might have thought us a victorious army.

First came the martial rhythms of the "Partisans' Hymn," by the Vilna poet Hirsh Glik: "we vow never to accept the verdict of death . . . our grit and courage will spring up wherever blood has been spilled . . . ours is no twittering birdsong, but the call to armed resistance among the falling walls." But what really justified our straightened backs was the hymn that concluded our ceremony—*Hatikvah*, the Jewish national anthem and, after 1948, of the state of Israel. Sung at Zionist congresses ever since 1897, it confirmed that the reemergence of the Jewish people in its own land had begun *before* Hitler's destruction, and had come to pass in spite of it. "Our hope is not lost, the hope of two millennia: to be a free people in our land."

I have never sung *Hatikvah* or heard it sung without feeling a surge of gratitude to those who made its words come true. It isn't often that our contemporary experience surpasses descriptions we read in the Bible, but when it came to modern Israel, my mother might have said: *Yehezkel iz a hunt kegn unz*, Ezekiel is a pup compared to us. The prophet tells us that God's breath will enter the bones of dead Jews and make them live again:

> There was a sound of rattling, and the bones came together, bone to matching bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had grown, and skin had formed over them. . . . The breath entered them, and they came to life and stood up on their feet, a vast multitude.

Just so: five days after the liberation of Belsen concentration camp in 1945, a Jewish chaplain conducted an open-air Friday-night service for several hundred Jewish survivors. In the recording of the

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event, you can hear the clearly shaken voice of the British broadcaster as he describes the 40,000 corpses already cleared away, the thousands more strewn over the grounds, the living cadavers lying and dying all around him. The liberated celebrant-mourners are sobbing openly. The service concludes with *Hatikvah*. "These people knew they were being recorded," says the announcer, "They wanted the world to hear their voice. They made a tremendous effort, which quite exhausted them."

The people I stood among in those postwar assemblies were hardly cadavers, but members of a nation that had risen from the dead. Who had time for vengeance, when Jewish children were waiting to be born?

This, however, was not the question that would continue to present itself most urgently, either to Jews or to others.

A couple of decades after the war, responsibility for commemorating the mass murder of the Jews began to pass from the Yiddish circles of immigrants and refugees to the officially constituted Jewish community, to people who had not known at first hand the individuals or the communities that were obliterated. Survivors anxious to have their experiences known found an increasingly receptive English-speaking audience. Grateful to be heard, they did not always care how others appropriated their depositions. Black boots and swastikas. Auschwitz and Zyklon B. Mounds of cadavers. American and Russian rescuers. I had lived and still lived so intimately in the shadow of the *milkhome* that I did not trust the ease with which Jewish organizations and others outside the community began to represent it as the "Holocaust," and even less its passage into the public domain as a general symbol of "man's inhumanity to man."

In the 1960's, I was preparing for an academic career teaching Yiddish literature. Until I could find a way of introducing my subject into one of the local universities, I looked for interim work. Thanks to a sympathetic director, I persuaded the Montreal YM-YWHA to set up an institute of Jewish studies that would offer courses for adults, including one in Yiddish literature. The institute opened successfully with eleven courses, but in subsequent years attendance dwindled and we spent much time trying to determine how to attract the ever-elusive "younger crowd." The Holocaust was proposed as the subject with broadest potential appeal. And so it proved to be, there and everywhere else.

When Jewish studies later became part of the curriculum at McGill University, my colleagues and I naturally paid due attention to the destruction of European Jewry, but we offered no separate course in the subject. Our primary obligation, as we saw it, was to cover the full sweep of Jewish history, culture, and thought, from the Bible to the modern Land of Israel. But a consortium of survivors petitioned us to change our priorities, and student interest supported their demand. If most of our courses in Jewish history, literature, philosophy, and religion attracted registrants numbering in the tens or twenties, "Holocaust," under that or any other name, would regularly draw a hundred.

Go argue with success. High registration figures were no small advantage at a time when the administration had begun looking at student/teacher ratios to determine a department's "effectiveness." And undeniably the 20th century held out few subjects of greater dramatic import, historical complexity, or intellectual challenge than the German genocide of the Jews. We tried to make our Holocaust course comprehensive and academically sound, avoiding the many temptations of emotional or ideological exploitation. Following Lucy S. Dawidowicz's history, *The War Against the Jews* (1975), we came at the subject from the respective angles of the perpetrators, collaborators, bystanders, and victims, trying to trace both the generative process of mass killing and the response of those whom it caught by surprise. Team-teaching this survey year after year, the half-dozen permanent faculty members tried to keep up with the textbooks, syllabi, memoirs, histories, films, documentaries, and primary-source materials of this fastest-growing subject in our field.

But what sort of success was this? No matter how scrupulously we taught it, the subject lacked the radiance of the Bible, the intellectual substantiality of the Talmud, the splendor of medieval Hebrew poetry, the moral insight of Maimonides. Historically, Jews had provided an alternative civilization to the civilization that produced Hitler—yet there we were, analyzing the exploits and the culture of our destroyers. Why should *we* have felt obliged to teach German pathology? Was it not for those implicated in the evil to wrestle with the historical problem of where the rot began, and how it spread? Jews faced the opposite problem—how to put an end to their victimization.

The Holocaust was not of the Jews' making—how frantically they had tried to escape its reach!—yet, with demonic irony, it was the topic through which Jews were becoming best known. By exterminating the Jews in so unprecedented a manner,

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the Germans had reduced them in life but magnified them in history. And yet, by the same token, Jews could not trust the Germans or their European helpers to write that history, for they and their heirs might naturally desire to play down their part and probably resented those who reminded them of it. In place of the justice that could never be attained, Jews had no choice but actively to preserve the fullest possible record of the atrocities and of the dead claimed by those atrocities.

Remembrance, if of a certain kind, has always been a staple of Jewish existence. Jews mourned the destruction of Jerusalem for 2,000 years in expectation of regaining their national homeland. Had they forgotten Jerusalem—as the biblical psalmist promises not to—they would never have survived to reclaim it. Many wartime diarists and postwar memoirists had a similar stake in Jewish resurgence. The imperative to record was more sacred to ghetto historians like Herman Kruk and Emanuel Ringelblum than the commandments given at Sinai. In her hideout on the Aryan side, Rachel Auerbach spent her nights recording the fate of everyone she had known inside the Warsaw Ghetto, and any of the dead about whom she had information. After the war, on a much larger national scale, she helped to establish the Jerusalem documentation center at Yad Vashem. Sooner or later most witnesses felt compelled to record what they had been made to undergo. The resulting flood of testimony would continue for as long as the last survivor drew breath.

My younger brother David, raised on remembrances of war, compiled an anthology of the Jewish literature of destruction, from the first Temple to the liturgies at the military cemeteries of Israel. Over the centuries, he writes, "No matter how long the list of martyrs grew to be, "and no matter how many disasters crowded the memorial calendar, they ultimately confirmed the covenantal relationship between the Jews and the God of history."* In our time, secular Jews similarly determined to remember and to record would transpose the language of "the God of history" into the language of history *tout court*: catastrophe was absorbed so as to generate renewed commitment to national life.

This was the lesson put into living practice by the state of Israel. Though the young nation required about a half-generation to address the task fully, it too absorbed the *Shoah*, as inexorably as it reintegrated refugees of the war into the fabric of society. (And refugees of later wars as well: the same Jewish Communist I introduced above would herself soon flee from Communist anti-Semitism in Poland to make her home in Israel.) Israelis knew that had the state been readied a decade earlier, a million more Jewish children might have frolicked on its beaches. Yet, belated or not, the Jewish homeland was the only credible moral retort to Hitler's genocide. Kibbutz memorials to ghetto fighters confirmed a posthumous victory. Remembrance of the Holocaust in Israel resembled the text of the Passover Haggadah, which rehearses the biblical story of the Exodus from "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt" to the emergence into freedom. Just so, visitors to the museum of Yad Vashem passed through exhibits of the genocide in Europe to be released into the life of the vibrant capital of a Jewish state. Quod erat demonstrandum.

BUT WHAT significance did the "Holocaust" have outside Jewish history? When the war ended, Primo Levi, a survivor of Auschwitz, wrote his famous memoir, *If This Is a Man* (1947), in Italian for his fellow Italians. A chemist by profession, a humanist in the Italian tradition, something of a stranger to his own Jewishness, Levi was the ideal literary guide to a world so incredible that only a perspective like his could render it marginally intelligible to those who were not there. At one point, he describes how he enlivened a fellow prisoner, a Frenchman who understood no Italian, by reciting and explicating a passage from Dante's *Inferno*. He must similarly have hoped that his own depiction of hell would strengthen his readers' ultimate trust in humanity as Dante had strengthened his.

Four decades later, Levi's follow-up memoir, *The Drowned and the Saved* (1986), describes his failure. He had felt compelled to shout his testimony from the rooftops, only to discover that "the man who shouts from the rooftops addresses everyone and no one, he clamors in the desert." He had emerged as a literary icon, but most Europeans were indifferent or hostile to reminders of their darkest past. Particularly depressing was his correspondence with German readers once his first book was translated into the language of those whom he most desperately wanted to understand and to be understood by. The Germans who sent him gifts pained him only slightly less than the Germans who plied him with self-justifications. His humanist faith, which had survived Auschwitz, did not survive the fate of his book about Auschwitz.

The case of the American novelist and journalist Meyer Levin was no less ominous. Covering Eu-

* I add here that my brother, David G. Roskies, will soon publish a book-length memoir, *Yiddishlands* (Wayne State), that treats our family history in a somewhat different light from the one I have emphasized in this essay.

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rope at the end of the war, Levin had searched for a way of bringing the Jewish tragedy home to the world. He believed that he discovered it in the *Diary of Anne Frank*, which he read in an early French edition. Bringing the work to the attention of American publishers, he helped to promote it into the most widely read Jewish book in history after the Hebrew Bible. But he was driven half-mad by the attempt of others to discount Anne Frank's Jewishness. For her growing self-awareness and national pride as a Jew, meticulously documented on page after page, the American stage version of the *Diary* substituted a laundered ecumenical message of uplift: "People are really good at heart."

It was no doubt out of a desire to reinforce this therapeutic sentiment, a presumed counter to history's outbursts of "man's inhumanity to man," that so much energy gathered behind the drive to establish Holocaust exhibits around North America. At planning sessions I attended for one such endeavor, the discussion centered on the prospective museum's educational potential for the public, rather than its commemorative function for the Jewish community. Everyone seemed confident that the representation of evil would have the appropriately redemptive effect.

For my part, contrary to such expectations, I worried that exhibiting what had happened to Jews under Hitler could reinforce existing ideas of them as perpetual victims and suspects. European Jews before and during Hitler's reign may not have fully credited the human potential for evil, but surely the surviving remnant among them, I felt, ought to be less willfully naïve about human proclivities. A child viewing exhibits of Nazi sadism and the heaps of confiscated Jewish property might well conclude from them that Jews were expendable, or that killing Jews was profitable, or could be fun. Others might derive titillation of a different sort. At a Holocaust museum in Europe, standing near a fellow tourist who was gazing at a blowup of naked Jewish women being herded toward execution, I heard her remark to her companion: "Get a load of those tits."

I was shocked less by the visitor's coarseness than by the curators' apparent assumption that such a photograph would have prophylactic rather than pornographic effect. How, indeed, could Hitler's all too successful war against the Jews possibly inspire respect for *any* human beings?

Two approaches to memorializing the Holocaust might have yielded a worthier universal lesson. Were the "story" told from a Jewish perspective, it could function like the Passover text I described above. Jews, it might say, lived in Europe for over two millennia in such and such places, conducting themselves in such and such ways and achieving such and such things. In the late 19th century, a period of emerging nation-states, they too began their recovery of their national homeland, then under the rule of the Ottoman empire and later of Great Britain. But before they could secure their place of refuge, catastrophe overtook them in such and such a fashion and subjected them to such and such horrors; at the lowest point in European civilization, Jews were almost wiped off the continent. During the war, they responded in such and such ways. After it, they emerged with even greater national resolve.

This is the way I myself experienced my life as a Jew, and the way I would have preferred it to be known by others.

A second approach might be subsumed under the motto "Never Again." Here the emphasis would fall on the political process through which the Holocaust came about. Thus: anti-Semitism, an anti-liberal, anti-Jewish ideology and political movement, began in Germany in the 1870's, tapping sources in Christian and other anti-Jewish notions from the European past. In the 1920's, under such and such conditions, Hitler grabbed hold of this ideology and, in the name of protecting the institutions of society from the Jews, imposed his total control over those same institutions. The spread of anti-Semitism in many other countries of Europe created a common political bond among nations otherwise opposed to Hitler's aggressive aims. The war against the Jews escalated, blended into, and was subsumed by the war of the Third Reich.

One key element in such an exhibit would be the wartime alliance struck between Adolf Hitler and the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, marking the point at which modern European anti-Semitism effected its entry into the Middle East. The last part of the exhibit would then move forward to today, illustrating how anti-liberal and anti-Jewish ideologies and movements continued to function, with variations, throughout the contemporary Arab and Muslim world. So documented, "Never Again" would be grasped not as some quasi-religious invocation but rather as simple political necessity, founded on the careful weighing of historical precedent and performance.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the largest and most important of such structures outside Israel, follows neither of these approaches. Its representation of the Jewish catastrophe is like a Passover Haggadah stuck in the section

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on slavery, recounting in great detail how many infant Jewish boys were drowned in the Nile, how many slaves were killed while building the cities of Pithom and Rameses, what cruelties were practiced against Jewish women, and so forth. In this dark telling, Jews are rescued in the end—by Americans, mostly—but there is no Jewish national resurgence, no emphasis on Jewish sovereignty, resilience, or self-defense. The theme song is not *Hatikvah*—the Jewish hope—but, if anything, "Over There," George M. Cohan's immortal American song from World War I, with its thrilling promise that "the Yanks are coming." Indeed, they came. Along the way, unfortunately, the effect of the museum's historical reconstruction of the Jewish side of the story is to make American visitors more comfortable with the idea of Jewish corpses than with the idea either of great rabbis or of Israeli soldiers.

Several years ago I watched an interview on public television with one of the museum's curators. When the phone lines were opened to viewers, one of the first to call was a self-identified Arab who asked why the museum did not document the "Israeli holocaust of the Palestinians." Looking out at the camera, the curator replied: "The museum only covers the years 1933-1945." She not only allowed the slander of Israel to go unchallenged but, like the museum itself, abrogated the responsibility to demonstrate the replicable features of anti-Semitism that had inspired not only her Arab caller but millions upon millions like him. That the museum "only covers the years 1933-1945" is precisely its moral and educational undoing.

When I was growing up I was certain that the worst was behind us, not because political evil had disappeared from the earth but because, through dreadful experience, Jews, Americans, and even Europeans had necessarily learned to guard against it. I believed that memorializing meant learning from history, and that the lessons of history were self-evident. I never imagined that, in the manner of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, one could re-present history in such a way as to resurrect its most vicious patterns, bringing about yet another generation of perpetrators, collaborators, bystanders, and potential victims. I never imagined the possibility that political forces in the world could threaten a catastrophe as great as the one the museum now records.

CODA: Whenever my older brother Ben calculated the political odds against the Jews, he would look to the reality of the Jewish homeland in Israel as an antidote to his dejection. The inscription we chose for his tombstone, from 1 Samuel 15:29, may serve the same purpose for others who, like him, occasionally succumb to despair: *netzah yisrael lo y'shaker*. A promise translated in the King James Version as "the Strength of Israel will not lie," it may more simply be rendered as "Israel will survive forever."

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Observations

Goethe's Magnificent Self

Algis Valiunas

In September 1808, Napoleon Bonaparte, the world-conquering Alexander of his time, summoned Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the most celebrated literary figure in Europe, to an interview at the Congress of Erfurt, not far from the writer's home in Weimar. The emperor was eating breakfast and conducting business when Goethe was admitted—there was no mistaking just who was condescending to whom here—and proceeded to dilate on a supposed defect in the plot of *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Goethe's 1774 novel about unrequited love that had won international renown.

Having read *Werther* several times, and having been inspired by it to try his hand, too, at a romantic novel, Napoleon wanted Goethe for his own. He envisioned him as the cultural star of a Parisian court—Beethoven was in his sights as well—that would be the artistic and intellectual cynosure of a federated Europe. Goethe would compose dramatic paeans to imperial military glory, employing classical subjects like the rise of Julius Caesar and thereby concealing the praise of Napoleon in plain sight. No one could fill this distinguished role so formidably as Goethe. Napoleon accented his esteem by declaring, loudly enough for his courtiers to hear, "*Voilà un homme*" (*there* is a man). Goethe, who was indeed a man, said thanks but no thanks.

Perhaps no other vignette from Goethe's life illustrates so tellingly the reach of his fame and the strength of his character. Not even compliments expertly applied by the most powerful man in the world could sway him. The very wholeness that Napoleon flattered rendered Goethe impervious to the flattery.

Of course, these days the powerful of the earth are unfamiliar with *Werther*. And not just the powerful: scarcely anybody in America reads Goethe any more; he is the deadest of Dead White Males. Nor is this a new development, or confined to America. Writing in 1962, W.H. Auden declared: "Everybody knows that the thrones of European Literature are occupied by the triumvirate referred to in [James Joyce's] *Finnegans Wake* as Daunty, Gouty, and Shopkeeper, but to most English-speaking readers the second is merely a name." Among the reasons enumerated by Auden are the difficulty of learning to read German and Goethe's peculiar resistance to translation into English.

John Armstrong, a philosophy research fellow at the University of Melbourne, has now bravely attempted to remedy this situation with a biographical study entitled *Love, Life, Goethe*.* As the title suggests, this is not your typical critical biography. Simple and straightforward in style, to the point of being occasionally simplistic or even smarmy, the book emphasizes the lessons that Goethe's exemplary life offers—lessons, that is, in how to live. In his acknowledgements, Armstrong mentions the shaping hand of Alain de Botton, the author of the immensely popular *How Proust Can Change Your Life*, and *Love, Life, Goethe* proves to have similar elements of exhortation and self-help, using its literary hero as a moral bootstrap.

Algis Valiunas, *who writes frequently on culture and politics, contributed "Fire from the Sky" to our July-August 2007 issue.*

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Armstrong's Goethe is an engagingly robust sort who happens to be graced with literary genius but who rejects the prevailing contrarian values of literary culture by honoring such bourgeois values as "money, power, learning, and status." Equally, although Armstrong does not come out and say so, his Goethe is the precursor of a familiar American type: the self-actualizing person described by the "Third Force" psychologist A.H. Maslow. For Goethe, as for Maslow, "the point of life is self-cultivation: the harmonious development of one's character." Armstrong himself appears to embrace this understanding of life without reservation. In the closing sentence of the book, he urges us to see Goethe's final message not as "a plea to understand him, or [to] become like him," but rather as an invitation to "take courage in an infinitely more worthwhile task—that of becoming ourselves."

At a time when the very mention of human nobility sends the spiders of egalitarian *ressentiment* scurrying from their dark corners—and when artists are expected to spit impudently in the face of normality—there is something undeniably alluring in the Goethe whom Armstrong honors. The question is, how alluring.

HE WAS BORN nearly dead on August 28, 1749; the planets' auspicious alignment, which he details in his autobiographical *Poetry and Truth* (1811-1832), must have helped him pull through. His father was a rather unsuccessful lawyer who had inherited a fortune, his mother the daughter of the principal official in the Frankfurt city council. Gentility and taste—a picture gallery was crammed with paintings after the Italian and Dutch styles, and hallways were hung with prints of Roman architecture—marked the Goethe household. In Armstrong's words, "The ideal of the well-run home and the life lived within it was, for him, emblematic of human fulfillment."

When Goethe was six, his father gave him and his younger sister a puppet theater for Christmas. Puppetry became his boyhood passion; he wrote plays, made costumes for the characters, and directed the action. His youthful literary tastes ran to Racine and Corneille, whom he plundered to serve his marionettes, and later to Torquato Tasso's chivalric epic *Jerusalem Delivered*, whose beautiful heroine Clorinda ravished him. By fifteen, he had also had his first taste, such as it was, of living feminine beauty thanks to a charming and willing waitress a few years older than he.

At sixteen he went off, somewhat grudgingly, to study law at the University of Leipzig, his father's alma mater. There he fell in love with an innkeeper's daughter—a social misalliance that had to be broken off as there was no chance his father would let him marry her. Instead he wrote a play about it, *Partners in Guilt*, not for the last time turning his erotic unhappiness to literary advantage.

Hard luck in love, an unfavorable course of study, and intense spiritual anxiety contributed to Goethe's physical and emotional collapse. He came home from Leipzig seriously ill and without a degree. Recovery took a couple of years, but in 1770 he was able to resume his legal studies, this time at Strasbourg. There, with Johann Gottfried Herder, he enjoyed his first passionate intellectual friendship. Herder had confounded the Enlightenment faith in the triumph of universal reason by championing the significance of local customs and beliefs. Under his influence, Goethe produced an essay on the Gothic splendors of the Strasbourg cathedral—the Gothic style being then widely derogated as a lapse from classical beauty.

And once again he fell in love, this time with the daughter of a country parson. The romance seemed headed inexorably toward marriage, but the prospect spooked Goethe and he unceremoniously bailed out. Armstrong quotes the final lines of a poem he wrote at the time:

> I went, you stood, your eyes
> on the ground; you gazed
> after me through your
> tears.
>
> But what a joy it is to love
> and, my God, what joy to
> be loved.

He would always find it a joy to write beautiful verse about the hearts he broke, even when one of them was his.

Degree at last in hand, Goethe returned to Frankfurt, ostensibly to practice law but actually to devote most of his time to writing. His essay on the Strasbourg cathedral appeared in a collection by the *Sturm und Drang* ("Storm and Stress") movement, whose members were sworn to the bold romance of transcendent youthful energy. Bold romance also marked his first successful play, *Goetz von Berlichingen* (1773), about a 16th-century knight who defies imperial authority but is broken by its superior power. Armstrong: "Thus Goethe broaches the question that was to dominate his work for the rest of his life: if we don't want to be tragic heroes, how are we to live in a very imperfect world: the only world we have?"

GOETHE WOULD invent a very different sort of tragic hero in *The Sorrows of Young Werther*—dreamy, feckless, self-absorbed, fatally obsessive in love. Drawing upon the young author's romantic experience during a term of service at the Imperial Court of Appeal in Wetzlar, *Werther* portrays through letters the hero's desperate hankering for the unavailable Lotte, which consumes everything that connects him to contented normality. This perfectly constructed novel ends with Werther blowing his brains out with Lotte's husband's pistol.

Werther made Goethe a European cult figure. Pathologically sensitive young men and women were

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said to have bid the cruel world farewell with Goethe's volume open beside them. Armstrong (who denies there is any evidence such ritual suicides ever happened) takes pains to distinguish Goethe's teaching from his character's fate. "With genuine Romantics, he shared an interest in despair, passion, and wildness; he didn't share their admiration for these extreme states."

In 1775 Goethe fell in love again, with the sixteen-year-old daughter of a wealthy Frankfurt banker, but once again he shied away from marriage. In any case he preferred the moral adventure of making himself into something superb to the routine of settling down as a family man in Frankfurt. And adventure soon arrived in the form of an invitation from Carl August, the eighteen-year-old Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, to visit his court.

Accepting on a moment's whim, Goethe wound up making his home in Weimar for the rest of his life. The worldly, active life of a court official—in 1776 he was appointed to the duke's private council—clearly filled a need in his many-sided nature. Over the course of his tenure he variously held portfolios in mining, transportation, war, and finance; he accompanied Carl August on the campaign against the revolutionary French in 1792; and he served as chancellor at the University of Jena, at a time when the professoriate included Schiller, Fichte, and Hegel. For someone seeking to perfect his self and soul, here was exactly the right opportunity to join the contemplative with the active life.

His writing benefited from this infusion of worldliness. His play *Torquato Tasso* (1790) depicts the conflict between an honored but unbalanced poet and an accomplished courtier who refuses Tasso the friendship he thinks he deserves. The tragedy *Egmont* (1787) shows a doomed political hero who in his prison cell is vouchsafed a magnificent vision of Liberty in the form of a beautiful woman but whose mission fails because he lacks the prudence to survive. Goethe learned the lessons of prudence in his political life, and transmitted them in these shapely and vital dramas.

EVEN SO, Weimar could not give him everything he needed. In September 1786 he slipped out of the duke's hands and headed south. Italy had beckoned for many years, and he would spend twenty months there, mostly in Rome. As he wrote in *Italian Journey* (1816), a compilation of journals and letters, "Can I learn to look at things with clear, fresh eyes? How much can I take in at a single glance? Can the grooves of old mental habits be effaced?" He was after happiness, sought it in the everyday activities of ordinary people, where he found beauties worthy of lasting art, and sought it too in the noblest artistic masterpieces. Simply to open his eyes on Rome was the beginning of a long-awaited education.

Inevitably, that education extended to the more basic pleasures as well: the *Roman Elegies* (1790) detail his sexual adventure with a young widow he calls Faustina. If the record of Goethe's sex life up till then had been laden with unfulfilled desire, the *Elegies* highlight the delicious facts of love-making as enjoyed by an initiate into physical pleasure:

> Now not Jupiter's pleasure in
> Juno's embraces is
> greater,
> And no mortal's content vies,
> I will wager, with mine!
> Ours is the true, the
> authentic, the naked
> Love; and beneath us,
> Rocking in rhythm, the bed
> creaks the dear song of
> our joy.

Goethe's sexuality stayed lit when he returned to Weimar in 1788. An attractive twenty-three-year-old approached him while he was promenading by the river, and it seems they were making love by the next day. Christiane Vulpius was common and uneducated, and worked in a factory making artificial flowers; but she was exactly what Goethe wanted. Although the gossips would snipe continually at the great man's lowering himself to consort with a mere wench, Goethe lived with Christiane for twenty-five years, married her in 1806, and fathered a son by her.

There was a need in Goethe's life for passionate male friendship as well; he found it with the younger playwright, historian, and philosopher Friedrich Schiller. After a rough start—Schiller felt insufferably in Goethe's shadow during the first years of their acquaintanceship—the two would exchange a thousand letters, start up the vastly influential literary magazine *Die Horen* (The Hours), collaborate on a collection of epigrams against foolishness, and love each other with warm constancy. The day Schiller died in 1805, at the age of forty-five, may have been the saddest of Goethe's life.

In 1806 Goethe completed the first part of the verse drama *Faust*; he would work on the second part virtually until the end of his life in 1832. His fame grew so immense that his Weimar home became an obligatory stop on the Grand Tour. In 1823 the aspiring poet Johann Peter Eckermann paid a call on the great man, and they began a conversation that lasted nine years, to Goethe's final days. Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe* (which Nietzsche called "the best German book there is") records Goethe's thoughts on everything from the stature of Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare, Napoleon, and Byron, to the proper training of actors, to the wish that he could live to see the Panama and Suez Canals built, to the hope that his unflagging industry might be an earnest of his soul's immortality. The book also records the awed and tender moment Eckermann spent with Goethe's dead

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body: "A perfect man lay in great beauty before me; and the rapture the sight caused made me forget for a moment that the immortal spirit had left such an abode."

THE IMMORTAL spirit had certainly spent its full allotment of energies while on earth, hurling itself into every sort of artistic and intellectual undertaking, and performing them all with genius and fire. Goethe was perhaps the greatest lyric poet Germany has produced. Youthful ardors turned out simple lyrics clear and shining as dew, like *Heidenroeslein* ("Rosebud in the Heather") and *Mailied* ("May Song"), a leaping, headlong frolic utterly heedless of the thought that the joys of young love will end. Yet at twenty-four Goethe could also write *Prometheus*, railing in a truculent humanist mode that has no use for gods but reveres the self alone.

Nature was Goethe's muse, as it had been Shakespeare's. *Künstlers Abendlied* ("An Artist's Evening Song") celebrates the poet's emerging creative power as it enjoys nature's wondrous force. In *Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen* ("The Metamorphosis of Plants"), written in 1798, botany is made erotic as scientific wonder blooms and enfolds human love. Our sensory, intellectual, and moral powers, Goethe believed, are fitted to this world:

> Something like the sun the eye must be,
> Else it no glint of sun could ever see;
> Surely God's own powers with us unite,
> Else godly things would not compel delight.

Goethe was an inspired scientific amateur. Believing that science was best served by the direct observation of nature, he made his most startling discoveries outside the laboratory and without benefit of instrumentation. Wandering through the gardens of Palermo in 1787, he hypothesized that the several developing structures of plants were variations on the leaf "in its most transcendent sense." Picking up a sheep's skull in the Jewish cemetery in Venice in 1790, he speculated that the bones of the skull were evolutionary outgrowths of the vertebrae. In a letter to Schiller in 1796, he coined the term "morphology," and his writings on the metamorphoses of vegetable and animal forms and structures would set the course for 19th-century biology. Although his studies of light and darkness, set forth in his *Theory of Colors* (1810), exhibit a dubious contempt for the mathematical foundations of Newtonian physics, some scientists still take them seriously as a complement to classic optics.

BUT HIS supreme gifts remained those of the writer. The early days of Goethe's friendship with Schiller coincided with the completion of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795), his extraordinary *Bildungsroman* or novel of education.* As the story begins, Wilhelm, the son of a respectable bourgeois household, is certain that he has found his destiny in the love of a beautiful actress and the prospect of a glorious career for himself in the theater. But realizing one's destiny—or fulfilling one's nature—requires more than transports of imagination. Wilhelm loses his love, and discovers in the end that he is not made for a theatrical career; he can only play himself. To his profound good fortune, a secret brotherhood of wise and accomplished men watches over him and guides him toward worthy and suitable ends.

Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship is the most hopeful and joyous of the great novels of education. The ashen cynicism of such later masterpieces of the genre as Balzac's *Lost Illusions* and Flaubert's *The Sentimental Education* is far removed from Goethe's world, in which the qualities of chivalric romance—mysterious characters, uncanny incidents, ineffable coincidences, the richest hearts suffering the deepest sorrows and knowing incalculable elation—are transposed into the novel's modern setting. The marvels of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, with its sage and virtuous brotherhood leading the young to happiness, lie close at hand, and the severe trials and hard-won joys of Tolstoy's heroes, Pierre Bezukhov in *War and Peace* and Constantin Levin in *Anna Karenina*, can be seen in the distance.

Not that Goethe is the novelist that Tolstoy is. He lacks the intensity of sensuous imagination that is the mark of a creator's love for his creatures, and his plot advances largely and sometimes with a clunk by means of the intellectual conversation, the disquisition, the soliloquy. As for *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*, a sequel that was not completed until 1825, it has all the faults of the *Apprenticeship* and then some, but almost none of its virtues.

Elective Affinities (1809) is a much finer novel, though it too suffers from hypertrophic abstraction. A story about adultery and its tragic consequences serves Goethe as a setting in which to ask what are the privileges and obligations of spiritual genius. Eduard and Charlotte, recently married in mid-life and decidedly happy, invite into their home Eduard's friend the Captain and Charlotte's young niece Ottilie. Of course the Captain and Charlotte fall in love, and so do Eduard and Ottilie. Then Charlotte and Eduard have a child whose features eerily resemble the Captain's and Ottilie's, and in a terrible accident the infant is drowned.

The various lovers, except for Ottilie, perceive this awful event by the light of their own desires—as a necessary sacrifice that frees them for happiness. Divorce and remarriage seem in the offing; but Ottilie refuses, dissolving the presumption

* The translation of choice remains, after 183 years, Thomas Carlyle's, which has recently been reissued in paperback. Aegypan Press, 508 pp., $25.00.

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that demonic powers can be reasoned with, or that love can be subjected to calculation. To realize her pure intentions, Ottilie starves herself, and in death works saintly miracles. Eduard follows her to the burial vault, "and what a happy moment it will be when one day they awaken again together." Such is Goethe's brief for the primacy of the spirit in the erotic life, and one of the most remarkable books ever written about love.

FINALLY THERE is *Faust*. The most learned of scholars, Faust wants not only to extend the bounds of human knowledge but to enjoy the bountiful experience of the world that his cloistered life has denied him. He proclaims a proto-Nietzschean love of the here and now, and defiantly renounces idle dreams of some better world to come. By striking a pact with the devil Mephistopheles, he gains the power to feel everything, absolutely everything—the full measure of what it means to be human, which is both to suffer and to rejoice. According to the pact, only when he achieves a moment of ultimate satisfaction will his life end and his soul belong to the powers of hell.

To avoid this fate, Faust vows himself to perpetual striving. In the process he becomes complicit in great evil, seducing the simple beauty Gretchen, who drowns their child, and killing her honor-obsessed brother in a brawl. But Gretchen is granted eternal salvation—and so, in the end, is Faust himself. The angels sing, bearing Faust's immortal part to heaven:

> He's saved from evil, the great soul,
> Confounding clever Satan:
> "Who strives, and keeps on striving still,
> For him there is redemption!"

But it is not Christian virtue or divine mercy conventionally understood that has saved Faust; it is his indomitability and eagerness for more and more life. In this drama, Goethe's virtual worship of energy and *élan vital* exonerates his protagonist of patent monstrosities. God, as Goethe understands Him here, not only loves but *respects* the sort of man that Goethe spent his life trying to be: relentless in the quest for knowledge, passionate in the pursuit of sensual fulfillment, devoted to the expansion of one's powers in every direction. In the face of such glory, which represents an amoral force of nature at its full stretch, mere goodness shrinks.

IN THE LAST days of his life, speaking with his friend Eckermann, Goethe professed his faith in Jesus Christ "as the divine manifestation of the highest principle of morality." But then he went on to declare his reverence for the sun, "likewise a manifestation of the highest Being, and indeed the most powerful that we children of earth are allowed to behold." In *Faust*, Christ-like morality submits to solar power. The heavenly spectacle of salvation that crowns the play is a vehicle for a pagan cult of the magnificent self.

Goethe was not only that cult's leading devotee but also its supreme deity. He was the most remarkably accomplished man of modern times; surely no one else since Michelangelo has had such rightful claim to the royal title of *l'uomo universale*, the universal man. If (as A.H. Maslow and a host of others have taught, and as John Armstrong agrees) self-actualization *is* the human ideal, then Goethe, in dedicating himself to the development of his gifts and the refinement of his character, embodied humanity at the peak of its attainment.

Victor Hugo said the problem with Goethe was that he let his indifference to good and evil go to his head. One suspects that Hugo had *Faust* in mind, but he might also have been thinking more generally of the self-absorption required for Goethe's project of manifold literary, philosophic, and scientific mastery. Vast as Goethe's achievement was, nothing he wrote quite equals the overwhelming humanity of Hugo's *Les Misérables*—the tenderness for inconsequential human flotsam, the willingness to weep unabashedly at salvation achieved through torment, the hatred of human malignancy that does not eradicate sympathy for the most malign among us.

One cannot escape the conclusion that, for all his imaginative insight into the lives of others, the life Goethe cared for the most was his own. He cannot but inspire a certain reverence. Yet unlike others among the great writers—Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky—he does not inspire love. And as for other would-be self-actualizers, down to this day, the devil alone knows their fate.

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MUSIC

Hitler's Accompanists

Terry Teachout

ON THE SPRING day in 1945 that Nazi Germany's official radio network broke the news of Adolf Hitler's death, the announcement was followed by the playing of a 1942 recording by Wilhelm Furtwängler and the Berlin Philharmonic. The work chosen was the elegiac slow movement of Anton Bruckner's Seventh Symphony. This was the last of countless times that classical music, most of it written by Bruckner and Richard Wagner, Hitler's two favorite composers, was played on Nazi ceremonial occasions, or otherwise enlisted in the service of the Third Reich.

That Wagner's music should now be retrospectively tainted by these dark associations has a certain rough justice, since he was a sometime political activist whose anti-Semitic writings are favorably cited to this day on neo-Nazi web sites and whose most popular opera, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, is both a romantic comedy and a nationalist tract.* But there would seem to be no grounds for thinking that Hitler and his henchmen actually read Wagner's notorious 1850 essay, "*Das Judentum in der Musik*" ("Judaism in Music"), or his writings on any other subject, prior to the establishment of the Third Reich. As for Bruckner, he is not known ever to have uttered a word about politics at any time prior to his death in 1896, and he cannot reasonably be supposed to bear any responsibility, however speculative, for the misuse of his music by Hitler and the Nazis.

How, then, did the cultural commissars of the Third Reich find it so easy to appropriate the music of these composers and use it to their own ideological ends? Could there have been anything intrinsically political about their musical *style*—a style, moreover, the best-known interpreters of which included a number of Jewish conductors who, like Otto Klemperer and Bruno Walter, were forced by the Nazis to give up their careers in Germany and Austria and flee for their lives? And if it was not a matter of style, how *did* this Austro-German classical music come to be seen by the German people as a symbol of the regime in which so many of them believed?

These familiar questions are addressed to freshly illuminating effect in Karen Painter's *Symphonic Aspirations: German Music and Politics, 1900-1945*, one of the first books in English to take a wider historical view of the phenomenon of the politicization of classical music in Nazi Germany.† Instead of concentrating on the institutional life of the Third Reich, Painter, an associate professor of music at the University of Minnesota, has examined the ways in which symphonic music was portrayed by Austrian and German journalists throughout the first half of the 20th century. As she explains in her introduction:

> This book is not a study of composers—their creative development or even their response to the political turmoil and world wars—but rather a history of what critics and commentators believed was at stake, artistically and culturally, in the works they reviewed and the composers they presented to the public.

To this end, Painter has examined hundreds of German-language

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* See Samuel Lipman, "Wagner Comes to Broadway" (COMMENTARY, January 1976).

† Harvard, 354 pp., $49.95.

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newspaper articles and books about music, most of them never before translated into English. They date from a time when, as I wrote recently in connection with the British critic Neville Cardus, "it was taken for granted that the critics of major papers would write in detail and at length about the events they covered."* Nor were these critics talking to themselves: their ongoing debates over the meaning and significance of Austro-German music were read and pondered by a large and well-educated general audience. What, then, did they have to say, and what effect if any did it have on German culture under Hitler?

Abstraction is the natural state of Western classical music. A song can be meaningfully experienced apart from its lyrics, and one need not know what Beethoven thought his "Pastoral" Symphony was "about" in order to respond emotionally to the musical events embodied in it. Conversely, the capacity of instrumental music to convey *ideas* is nugatory. No one listening to Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra* for the first time and without knowledge of its program would be likely to guess that it "tells" the story of Nietzsche's prophet-philosopher.

The radical ambiguity of music might seem at first glance to ensure its political autonomy. At the same time, though, it inevitably encourages verbal interpretation—and the more abstract the music, the wider the range of possible interpretations. Arguments over the political content of *Die Meistersinger* may be limited (albeit modestly) by the plain meaning of Wagner's libretto, but the same does not apply to arguments over the political content of a symphony. As Painter points out, "Instrumental music, without programmatic guidance, has no concrete meaning to restrict the interpreter," thus making it "the art form most capable of embedding ideology."

Robert Schumann remarked in 1837 that when listening to Beethoven, "a German feels in spirit that he won the battles lost to Napoleon." Already by then it had become common for Germans to view their musical heritage as central to their national identity. Nor were they wrong to do so, since the history of 19th-century music is in large part a string of Austro-German triumphs. Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Wagner, Brahms: these were the composers who revitalized the classical tradition by romanticizing it.

All of these composers, except for Wagner, saw the four-movement symphony as the *Ur*-form of large-scale musical expression, the ultimate test of a composer's mettle. Typically, their symphonies describe a dramatic arc, beginning with tonal uncertainty and ending in decisive major-key resolution. This is a form especially susceptible of verbal explication, and of a specifically heroic kind. Partly because so many romantic symphonies seemed to suggest just such interpretations, the symphony came to be seen by German listeners as the quintessentially German musical genre, one whose ubiquity symbolized their country's dominance not only of the culture of classical music but of the realm of the human spirit altogether.

Then came the 20th century and the emergence of the modern movement in art, which was widely perceived as a threat to German cultural stability, Accordingly, Painter observes, the state of the symphony became a subject of increasingly heated critical debate. The template had been updated once from classicism to romanticism; could it be updated yet again to suit the tastes of modern Germans?

For his part, Anton Bruckner had infused traditional symphonic forms with explicitly Wagnerian musical content, thereby bringing into being the works that his opera-loving "master of all masters" (as he referred to Wagner) had disdained to compose. Gustav Mahler, by contrast, produced grandiose symphonies whose innovative structures and sonorities challenged the received definition of the genre. The way in which a critic responded to the works of these two composers generally reflected the extent to which the critic himself was prepared to embrace the possibilities of modernity.

Thus, conservative critics judged by the degree to which composers hewed or failed to hew to tradition, and in particular by the degree to which their work portrayed (in Painter's words) "the actions and emotions of a heroic figure, and therefore of an individual who spoke for the collective." By that criterion, it was all but inevitable that the Jewishness of Mahler, the anti-traditional symphonist, should have become a point of contention.

Painter cites numerous examples of invidious references to the supposed relationship between Mahler's ethnicity and the purely stylistic innovations of his music. This excerpt from Rudolf Louis's 1909 book *Die deutsche Musik der Gegenwart* ("Contemporary German Music") is typical:

> If Mahler's music would *speak* Jewish, perhaps it would simply be incomprehensible to me. But I find it repulsive because it *judaisizes*. That is, it speaks German, as it were, but with an accent, tone, and above all the *gestures*, of Jews from the East, too much from the East.

Discussions of Mahler's Jewishness were not limited to German-speaking critics. Samuel Langford, who covered the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra's Mahler festival for the *Manchester Guardian* in 1920, remarked of the composer's conversion to Christianity that "while there is every reason why a Jew should show sympathy with Christianity from its origin and make it prominent in his art, the Jewish-Catholic standpoint is complex to the normal sensibilities." But Langford wrote as a (qualified) admirer of Mahler's music, whereas the Austro-German critics who

* "The Amateur as Critic" (Commentary, November 2007).

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made a point of his Jewishness used it as a weapon against him.

THE DEVOUTLY Catholic Bruckner, by contrast, was portrayed as a bulwark against modernity, to the point where one critic actually described his symphonies as "more perfect, more beautiful, and more sublime than Beethoven's." This attitude was well embodied in Neville Cardus's description of a concert in England given by Otto Klemperer and the Vienna Philharmonic in 1933:

> He was about to begin the Ninth Symphony of Bruckner; he stood arms outstretched before the Vienna Philharmonic, baton poised. The concert hall was hushed and tense. Next to me was sitting a middle-aged Viennese, and before Klemperer moved his baton, before a single note of Bruckner was attacked or heard, this middle-aged Viennese burst into tears, and buried his head in his hands.

The fact that Klemperer was Jewish adds a sharp point of irony to the anecdote. He had only just emigrated from Germany, and within a few years the famously anti-Semitic Vienna Philharmonic would find it possible to dispense with his services altogether. By then the politicization of music criticism in Central Europe was for all intents and purposes complete. Even progressive critics had embraced the notion that symphonic music could have political implications.

The groundwork was thereby laid for the emergence of a politician-artist who understood the power of music to sway men's minds, and who would use it to malign effect.

Hitler's love of the music of Wagner and his close relations with the Wagner family are well known.* But Bruckner's symphonies meant no less to him, and the use that he made of them was at least as theatrically effective. The musicologist Bryan Gilliam has described the most spectacular of these latter occasions:

> National Socialists and members of the International Bruckner Society gathered in Regensburg [in 1937] to consecrate a Bruckner bust installed in the Valhalla, an 1841 replica of the Parthenon, filled with statues commemorating Teutonic cultural heroes. Photographs of the highly publicized event show Adolf Hitler, Joseph Goebbels, Heinrich Himmler, and others in full military regalia, gazing reverently at the Bruckner likeness.

In practice, the Nazis were unable to exert total control over Germany's musical life, if only because Nazism was a mass movement led by men who, except for Hitler and (up to a point) Goebbels, were musical philistines. But by the time they came to power, much of the job of enlisting German music in the service of politics had already been done for them. All that remained was to reap the whirlwind.

THE DEBATES discussed in *Symphonic Aspirations* will have a familiar ring to anyone conversant with American art in the days of the 1930's Popular Front, when Communist artists and their fellow travelers succeeded in persuading a considerable number of Americans that the best art was that suitable for use as a "hammer" with which to batter fascism into submission. They are no less relevant to the work of contemporary musicologists who re-interpret the classics in light of their quasi-Marxist ideological views, a practice that has given us such exercises in absurdity as a "homosexual analysis" of Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony.

The ultimate effect of such interpretations, of course, is to diminish the power of music itself. For when the Third Reich was reduced at last to ashes, so, too, was the German dream of continued dominance over the culture of classical music. This dream had been so powerful that it even haunted a Jewish modernist like Arnold Schoenberg, who famously remarked that his "discovery" of the twelve-tone system of composition would "ensure the supremacy of German music for the next hundred years." Instead, Austro-German composers, with the partial exception of Paul Hindemith, ceased to be a significant force in the postwar musical world.†

And what of the symphony itself? It, too, is in retreat. To be sure, symphonies—or, more precisely, pieces called symphonies—continue to be written, even by postmodern composers like Philip Glass whose styles are antithetical to the essence of the form. But since the death of Dmitri Shostakovich in 1975, no symphonist has emerged whose work has commanded the general attention of the worldwide concert-going public. The only symphony to enter the international repertory in recent years, Henryk Górecki's Third (1976), is written in a spare "holy minimalist" style whose stripped-down musical vocabulary has little in common with the structurally unifying tonal rhetoric of the romantic symphony.

It is, I suspect, no coincidence that Górecki's Third Symphony, whose subtitle is "Symphony of Sorrowful Songs," contains at its heart a vocal setting of a prayer whose source is described by the composer with stark and terrible simplicity:

> Prayer inscribed on wall 3 of cell no. 3 in the basement of "Palace," the Gestapo's headquarters in Zakopane; beneath is the signature of Helena Wanda Blazusiakówna, and the words "eighteen years old, imprisoned since 26 September 1944."

Those words could also serve as an epitaph for the aspirations of the 19th-century Austro-German symphony and its fervently misguided latter-day advocates.

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* Jonathan Carr's newly published *The Wagner Clan: The Saga of Germany's Most Illustrious and Infamous Family* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 409 pp., $27.50) contains a highly readable account of Hitler's friendship with the Wagners and his patronage of the Bayreuth Festival.

† Carl Orff, whose Nazi ties are described by Painter in *Symphonic Aspirations*, won international acclaim after World War II, but *Carmina Burana* (1936) is the only work of his that has retained its popularity.

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Books in Review

The Activist

Heroic Conservatism: Why Republicans Need to Embrace America's Ideals (And Why They Deserve to Fail If They Don't)

by Michael J. Gerson

HarperOne. 302 pp. $26.95

Reviewed by
John Podhoretz

WHATEVER the final verdict on George W. Bush's presidency may prove to be—and this has been a presidency at once so consequential and so controversial that any verdict is certain to be the subject of constant revision—it is questionable how much notice, if any, will be taken by future historians of the signature phrase of Bush's first election campaign in 2000. That phrase was "compassionate conservatism."

JOHN PODHORETZ *is the editorial director of* COMMENTARY *and the author of* Bush Country. *His* Can She Be Stopped? *has recently been issued in paperback (Three Rivers Press).*

The centrality of the phrase, and the concept behind it, had its basis in a canny political calculation. As a candidate, Bush needed to find a way to separate himself from the hard-edged and aggressive approach of the Republican "revolutionaries" led by Newt Gingrich who had come to dominate Washington after the 1994 mid-term elections. According to pollsters, any association with Gingrich-style Republicanism would pose a particular problem with independent female voters—the once-heralded "soccer moms" whose political worth was considered to be more valuable than rubies.

In response, the Bush team conjured up a specific American archetype whose life would be transformed for the better by the policies Bush was advocating. Not a resolutely middle-class "soccer mom," she was instead a type the soccer mom could empathize with: a working-class "waitress mom," a single mother laboring at a Denny's for $22,000 a year. Compassionate conservatism, it was said, would save her from penury. Bush's tax-cut plan would remove her from the federal impost rolls entirely. His policy of reforming education would ensure that none of her children was "left behind" in the quest to find a better life. His plan to funnel aid to the needy through faith-based institutions would allow her to receive help from the loving arms of her nearby church rather than from the indifferent and distant hands of federal bureaucrats. And if her elderly father or grandmother fell sick, she would be able to depend on a new federal benefit that would render their prescription-drug costs all but free.

Without compassionate conservatism, Bush would not have been elected. And, by the time he took the oath of office in January 2001, he surely had reason to believe that successful implementation of this agenda was going to be his legacy as President. Indeed, every element of compassionate conservatism was eventually enshrined as legislation or executive policy, even as each version of it emerged from the Washington policy mill in significantly adulterated form.

As the foundation for a series of legislative successes in the administration's first term, compassionate conservatism certainly deserves to be remembered. But America was at-

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One Must Also Be Hungarian

Adam Biro

Translated by Catherine Tihanyi

"The book, elegiac yet witty, gains in complexity as Biro grapples with the fact that his ancestors were not only Hungarian, but also Jewish. . . . Throughout this mournful and evocative book, this émigré son, who left Hungary when he was fifteen, tries to come to grips with why his unhappy heritage continues to have such a hold on him."

—Forward

Cloth $20.00

The University of Chicago Press

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tacked eight months after Bush took office. In the election campaigns that followed, the soccer mom gave way to the "security mom"—the woman whose paramount concern was said to be the physical safety of her family in an age of terror.

And so, instead of being judged on its record of helping the waitress mom, the Bush legacy is now universally believed to hang on three eventualities: the condition of Iraq and Afghanistan in the wake of the American-led wars there, the safety of the American homeland from further terrorist attacks, and the fate of Bush's program to advance liberty throughout the world. Compassionate conservatism is, already, little noted nor long remembered.

THAT WILL not remain true, however, if Michael J. Gerson has his way. Well known as Bush's chief speechwriter and rhetorical right-hand man for seven years, five of them in the White House, Gerson is now a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and a columnist for *Newsweek* and the *Washington Post*. His new book, *Heroic Conservatism*, is an ambitious and deeply felt effort to bond Bush's foreign-policy agenda to the agenda of compassionate conservatism. In Gerson's view, both of these initiatives are built on the same moral framework, the elements of which are explicated by him in an urgent and original blend of memoir, polemic, and exhortation.

Heroic conservatism, according to Gerson, is "a commitment to changeless ideals—which, when confidently applied, are a force for revolutionary change in our nation and the world." In part, he locates the basis of this commitment in "the tradition of Christian reflection on politics and government, embodied in Roman Catholic social teaching: a conservative respect for the institution of family and community, paired with a radical, uncompromising concern for the poor and weak." But practically, he writes,

> the roots of heroic conservatism are also found in America's long history of religiously inspired reform movements—the work of morally passionate malcontents who pushed for abolition, insisted on the reform of prisons and mental hospitals, and led the struggle for women's rights and civil rights.

For a personification of what he has in mind, Gerson points to Abraham Lincoln, the President "who was willing to risk bloody war rather than abandon the universal moral claims at the heart of the American experiment."

As Gerson sees it, then, the activist effort to lift the American poor from their straitened circumstances springs from the same motivating cause as the effort to extend democratic freedoms to parts of the world where people have been denied them. Each expresses the moral conviction "that every human being has a worth independent of their background and accomplishments; that the least have the same value as the great." And just as our times require "a sense of urgency in the cause of social justice at home," so they also require "a belief that the interests of America are served by the hope and progress of people in other lands."

Gerson's project is thus nothing if not sweeping. But what is perhaps most interesting and unusual about *Heroic Conservatism* is that its argument is aimed less at Bush's political and ideological opponents on the Left than at American conservatives. In the wake of the Republican rout in the 2006 mid-term elections, and with Democrats now in control of both houses of Congress, Gerson believes his party is once again in danger of embracing a view of government that is pinched, parsimonious, and politically wrongheaded. "Many conservatives," he warns, contend that

> it is necessary to move "beyond" Bush's domestic policy when they are really recommending a return to the conservatism of the

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1990's—the era in which leaders like Newt Gingrich, Tom DeLay, Dick Armey, and Senator Phil Gramm controlled the message of the movement . . . [and their] justified critique of government excess became an unbalanced hostility to government itself.

Nor is Gerson exercised by anti-big-government conservatives alone. He equally targets those cultural conservatives who believe that "America is in terminal moral decline," and whose pessimism was memorably embodied in Robert Bork's bestselling jeremiad of 1996, *Slouching Toward Gomorrah*. They, too, in Gerson's reckoning, both misconstrue and threaten to obstruct the mission of heroic conservatism—the only kind of conservatism that is not only squarely in America's best traditions but is the formula for future GOP successes.

Michael Gerson is the first close associate of George W. Bush to write about the President as a boss and a colleague, and his portrait of this doomed-to-be-misunderstood man is a highlight of his book. The Bush we meet in its pages is

> a man without a mask. Interest, frustration, disdain, or sadness come unfiltered to his expressive face. . . . When emotionally engaged, his authenticity is compelling. His personal honesty is nearly compulsive. He cries easily.

The two had their first meeting in 1999 when the future President was a Texas governor looking for a speechwriter and Gerson was working as a staff writer at *U.S. News & World Report*. (Gerson, whose last name is the legacy of a Jewish grandfather, was then perhaps the only open evangelical Christian on the staff of a major media publication—a distinction he may still hold.) A close relationship between the two men did not seem to be in the cards:

> I found that I had little in common with the governor. He was athletic, outgoing, likable—and I was none of those things. He had a penchant for crude humor that made me uncomfortable; not blasphemous language, but the vulgarity of the locker room. After one policy session at the mansion, everyone had gone but me, and the governor had some time before his next appointment. He asked me, "Do you want to hang out a little while?" With rudeness that now seems crazed, I replied, "Not really." He put his arm around me and said: "No, you don't do that, do you?"

But Bush's plainness of thought—"a folksy bluntness in a Texas idiom"—anchored Gerson, who had been seduced by the "highly crafted, rhythmic use of language" typical of the grand (and grandiose) speechifying of the 1960's. And the reverse was also true. "Over time," Gerson writes, Bush "came to demand" that his speeches address the most serious matters in the most elevated terms.

No President has ever had a more integral relationship with a writer, and what came out of this close connection supplies a key to understanding the policies of the Bush administration. The President, Gerson writes,

> unlike many of his predecessors, consistently used major speeches to put his personal imprint on policy, to force changes within his own administration, and to set his doctrines in rhetorical stone, requiring future Presidents to deal with them. The goals of the Bush presidency can be found in the text, not the subtext—in the words he chose to use, not in maneuvering behind the scenes.

Alas for Bush (and Gerson), however, while the words the President chose to use were for the most part unmistakable, there has always been plenty of maneuvering behind the

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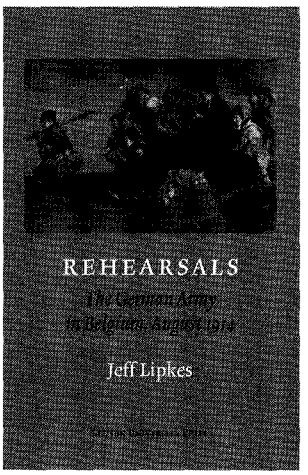

REHEARSALS
The German Army in Belgium, August 1914
Jeff Lipkes

The first book to provide a detailed narrative history of the German invasion of Belgium as it affected civilians, based on extensive eyewitness testimony. *Rehearsals* chronicles events in and around the towns of Liège, Aarschot, Andenne, Tamines, Dinant, and Leuven, where the worst depredations occurred.

Lipkes offers compelling evidence that the executions were in fact part of a deliberate campaign of terrorism ordered by military authorities. In his shocking account of events that have been largely overlooked by historians of World War I, Lipkes commemorates the heroism as well as the suffering of the Belgian victims of German aggression.

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scenes to impede or frustrate the execution of the policies he has laid out. This is especially true, as Gerson ruefully notes, with regard to foreign policy. He points to the President's unambiguous aim of promoting democracy in unfree lands, which in the case of Egypt included a forceful stand against the regime's mistreatment of dissidents. But when, following a 2005 visit to Cairo by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak tightened even more painfully the screws on domestic reformers, "the American response was less than forceful—mainly the ritual protests of diplomacy. America watched, and did little. Something had shifted, which I protested with little effect."

THAT LAST sentence is pregnant with meaning. Throughout this book, Gerson argues for the primacy of the highest moral ideals in the conception and implementation of government policies. But it is precisely the gap between the lofty principles expressed in speeches and the often compromised policies enacted by officialdom that has helped create public skepticism about the efficacy of government action to cure social ills. This skepticism vexes Gerson, but he does not offer a reasoned argument against it. He simply cautions conservatives not to be excessively fearful of the so-called "law of unintended consequences"—i.e., the possibility that government action intended to do good can have the opposite result.

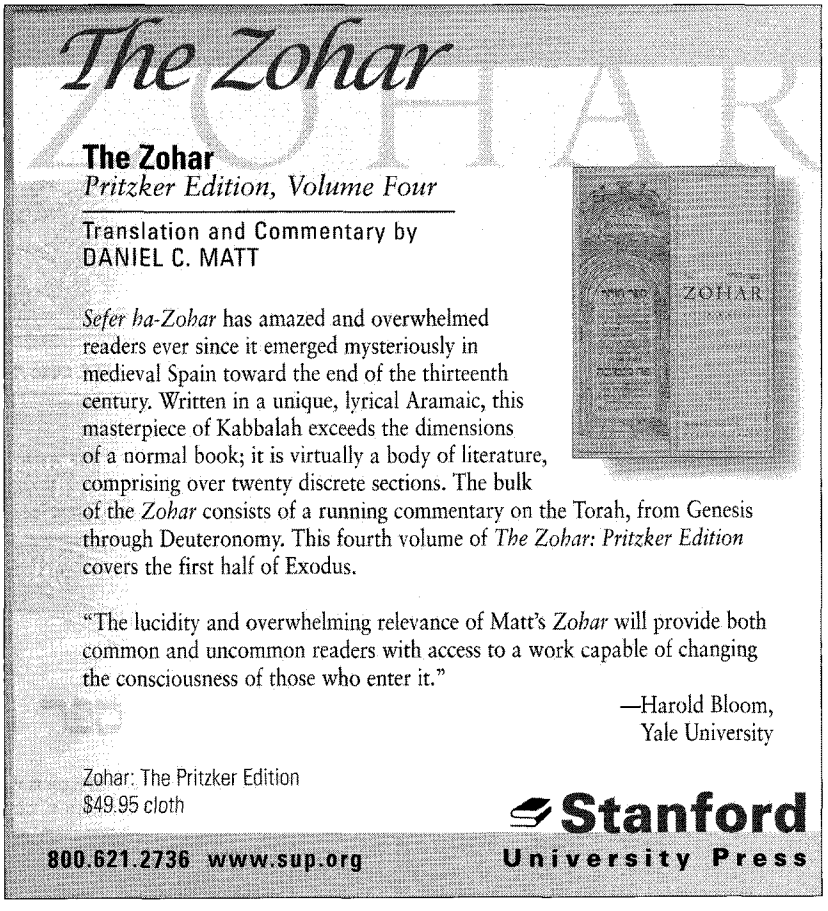
In issuing this caution, Gerson cites the well-known example of the War on Poverty—the multi-trillion-dollar experiment in national welfare that, 30 years after its initial passage during the Johnson administration, left America's poor in worse condition from nearly every perspective. This policy cataclysm did indeed provide a painful lesson in what can happen when government sets out to cure complex social ills. And yet it also gave birth to something that, when first propounded by Charles Murray and others in the early 1980's, seemed to be a wildly radical idea—namely, the cessation of welfare payments entirely.

This idea became the root of welfare reform. At first the province of conservative think tanks, it eventually came to be tried by Republican governors on an experimental basis—with such positive results that it was soon heralded as the policy of the future by, precisely, the same Republican politicians (Gingrich, Armey, DeLay, and Gramm) whose stewardship of the Republican party had been, in Gerson's curt summation, "not a pretty sight." The Republican Congress elected in 1994 wrote a welfare-reform bill cutting off direct payments after two years. In 1996, the bill was sent to a tortured President Bill Clinton and signed by him primarily because, in an election year, he was afraid his party would be punished at the polls if he failed to do so.

The wildly successful reform that followed is a prime example of how unintended consequences forced an entire nation to reverse a disastrous social policy. But what does Gerson do with this example? He writes:

> When welfare reform was proposed in the mid-1990's, a number of conservatives actually opposed it, arguing that the poor are incapable of work because they lack the habits and self-discipline necessary to hold a job. This is a traditional conservative temptation: cultural determinism, combined with disdain for the poor.

But in fact the only meaningful opposition to welfare reform came not from conservatives but from thinkers and politicians on the Left, some of whom were so committed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to the failed policies of the past as to prophesy that passage of the reform bill would lead to the deaths of untold thousands of children from hunger. One wonders what can have motivated this astonishing bit of historical revisionism on Gerson's part; the answer can only be the desire at all costs to dissuade conservatives from their instinctive wariness of government activism. But that wariness is well founded: it is almost impossible to name any large government program to address social ills that has *not* had unintended consequences.

"Like all true conservatives," Gerson writes, "I believe in limited government." But there is very little in this book about limiting government's reach and a great deal about expanding it. Gerson's call to idealism is inspiring, especially in his chapters dealing with Bush's campaign to combat AIDS in Africa—surely the most underappreciated initiative of this presidency and perhaps of any presidency in modern times. And his account of the thinking behind the magisterial series of addresses through which George W. Bush transformed the foreign policy of the United States after September 11 is essential reading for any student of American politics. But it seems Gerson never really grasped the truth about compassionate conservatism. This is that it was not a party program, let alone a developed political philosophy, but a marketing gimmick. It is thus little wonder that eight years of exploring the depths and reaches of this topic have led to a very singular brand of politics. Michael Gerson's party of heroic conservatism is, I fear, a party of one.

At Prayer

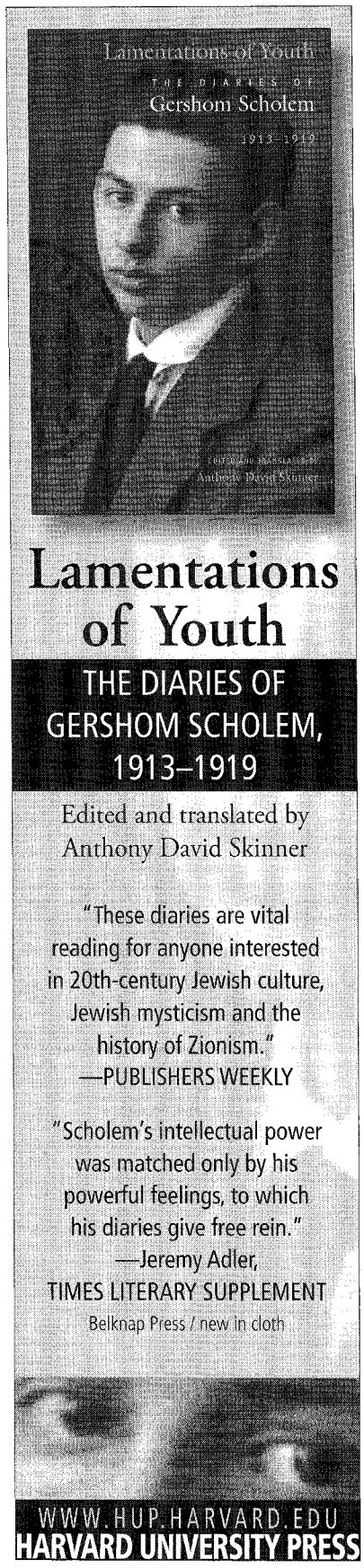
Mishkan T'filah:
A Reform Siddur
CCAR. 716 pp. $30.00

Reviewed by
William Kolbrener

This is the third prayer book to have been issued in the history of American Reform Judaism. The first, the *Union Prayer Book*, published in 1895, embodied the universalistic principles enunciated a decade earlier when a meeting of Reform rabbis in Pittsburgh affirmed the movement's "spirit of broad humanity" and its conception of Judaism as "a progressive religion ever striving to be in accord with the postulates of reason." In the *Union Prayer Book*'s clergy-centered services (largely in English and led not by rabbis but by "ministers"), all references to Jewish particularity—Temple, redemption, messiah, return to the land of Israel—were absent.

Eighty years later, in 1975, the *Union Prayer Book*, which by then had gone through a number of revised editions, was replaced by a second full-scale effort, *Gates of Prayer*. Instead of recovering Jewish particularity, this volume faithfully reflected a whole variety of contemporary Jewish tendencies, ideologies, and tastes—yielding, for example, ten separate Sabbath-evening services, including one without any mention of God whatsoever. Where the *Union Prayer Book* had been designed to replace the vocal "cacophony" of traditional prayer services with a sense of Protestant-like decorum, *Gates of Prayer* introduced a conceptual cacophony that in its drive for both inclusiveness and "choice" threatened the integrity of the movement itself. "If we are all things, we are nothing," rightly ob-

William Kolbrener, *a new contributor, teaches English literature at Bar Ilan University in Israel.*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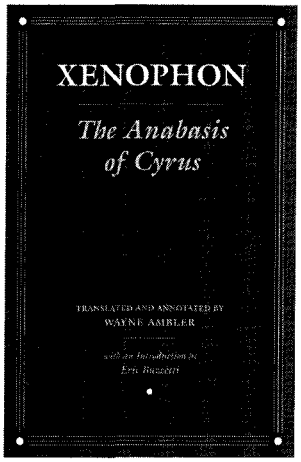

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served Lawrence Hoffman, professor of liturgy at Hebrew Union College.

Now comes this third prayer book, the product of two decades' worth of discussion groups, field studies, a blind competition for the editorial directorship, and countless sessions in committee. Quite consciously, *Mishkan T'filah* attempts to balance the excesses of its predecessors: the *Union Prayer Book*'s emphasis on the universal and *Gates of Prayer*'s emphasis on diversity. The result, not without interest, and hardly without problems, is something of a mishmash.

NOT ONLY the Hebrew title, translated as "the dwelling place of prayer," but the subtitle, "A Reform Siddur," shows some of the aspirations of the new volume. Turning explicitly toward tradition and Hebrew sources, this is the first Reform prayer book to be called by a traditional Hebrew name. At the same time, it is unmistakably *Reform*, above all in its fidelity to what the editor, Rabbi Elyse Frishman, describes as the "movement's tradition of liturgical innovation."

The paradox of *Mishkan T'filah* is contained in that easy linking of "tradition" and "innovation": it is at once more traditional and more radical than either of its predecessors. Both the right-to-left orientation of the layout and the abundance of Hebrew texts make it feel more like a customary *siddur*. Yet, while the right-hand pages provide (edited) Hebrew text, transliteration, and a conventional English translation, the left-hand pages offer freely doctored translations, "meditations" selected from diverse sources, and sundry literary productions, including poems by authors ranging from the medieval Hebrew master Shlomo ibn Gabirol to the Americans Delmore Schwartz and Adrienne Rich. All of these are flanked on the bottom by "spiritual commentaries" as well as "stage directions" for the proper "choreography" of prayer.

The ultimate purpose, according to Frishman, is to provide an "integrated theology," i.e., one that will allow for the expression of difference while simultaneously framing and containing it. Here is an example. *Mishkan T'filah* presents the *Sh'ma* ("Hear, Israel"), a core element of the liturgy, in Hebrew, but it does so in the form of a truncated extract of the prayer's traditional three paragraphs from the Bible; the stated reason is that the movement finds the teachings on divine reward and retribution "too challenging." Facing the first paragraph, with its injunction to teach the words of the Torah "diligently to your children," is a freely adapted translation of the Hebrew text in the form of a meditation, beneath which are utterly divergent commentaries by the sages of the Talmud on the one hand and Martin Buber on the other. While the former underline the connection between study of Torah and ethical behavior, Buber advocates an ethics pursued, in his words, "as if there were no God." Multiplying perspectives still further, the "stage directions" then elaborate an option, "for those who choose," to add the word "*emet*" (truth) as a way of affirming the biblical passages just recited.

"FOR THOSE who choose" is in fact an ever-present locution in *Mishkan T'filah*, a token of its emphasis on the needs and desires of the individual worshipper. Since, as Frishman asserts, "performance of prayer matters more than fixed words," prayer leaders are instructed to select only one prayer per "page spread," allowing individual congregants to make their own spontaneous choices from the offerings before them.

But how is this to be achieved in practice? Frishman fondly imagines Reform congregations becoming like those "vital congregations" of the past who knew "their order of worship and moved through it with deep familiarity." Generations of Jews have indeed integrated into

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their daily lives and mental processes the cadences and rhythms of their liturgical texts. But how likely is it that worshippers will commit to memory David Meltzer's "Tell them I'm struggling to sing with angels. . . . Tell them I sit here invisible in space; nose running, coffee cold and bitter"?

Even if some were to find Meltzer's verse compelling, moreover, Reform habits of synagogue attendance are so spotty as to render improbable any real internalization of favorite texts. Frishman herself concedes that "regulars" (as opposed to "occasional worshippers") come to services only twelve times annually on average. Those who also need printed reminders of where to "vary vocal expression" with either "quieter or more exuberant tones" cannot be easily imagined mastering the arts of spontaneity.

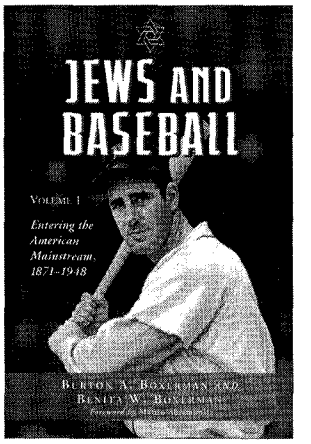
And then there is the matter of navigating the manifold choices presented in this *siddur*—one of the ways in which it resembles its immediate predecessor even as it affects to transcend it. On offer, for example, are four different versions of *Aleinu*, the proclamation of fealty to the One God that traditionally ends a prayer service; each of the four manifests a distinct attitude toward non-Jews and to the related matter of the election of Israel. Elsewhere, variant versions either do or do not mention the resurrection of the dead. And so forth. A liturgy that requires "real time" decisions about such complex theological issues—how does one make a split-second evaluation of belief in the eternality of body and soul?—hardly sounds like an experience in either informed choice or deep spiritual engagement.

Worse, on the very issues for which the *siddur* presents so many options, Frishman admits that lay people "seem not to care significantly," while "clergy care a great deal." And in this way, for all the distance traveled from the *Union Prayer Book*, the current one retains a strong family resemblance to its earliest predecessor as well. Even its layout, with texts and commentaries intermingled as on a page of Talmud, seems designed to prompt respectful study rather than devotion. But unlike a page of Talmud, and despite the emphasis on the virtue of "many voices," a voice has been supplied, and it is very much a clerical one.

Although *Mishkan T'filah* may look like a postmodern bricolage of disparate attitudes and beliefs, it is in fact informed by a top-down apparatus of certain core notions. These, grouped in the introduction under the general heading of "Reform Judaism and Life," are summarized by Frishman as "social justice, feminism, Zionism, distinctiveness, human challenges." In this sense, *Mishkan T'filah* emerges as a liturgical artifact of the movement's conviction that no matter how diverse or even incommensurate its members' beliefs may be, they can be contained within a single and on the whole rigid framework. In the end, that framework is really not so far from the 1885 call in Pittsburgh for "a progressive religion ever striving to be in accord with the postulates of reason"—reason being understood then as now in terms of enlightened contemporary values.

A final question is what all this has to do with prayer. Frishman writes that it is "critical that Reform Jews know what is expected of them" when they enter a synagogue. But are they expected to imbibe an elevated version of the Reform party line, or are they expected to praise, thank, and beseech the God of Israel? Perhaps the most disappointing thing about this book is that, in its pages, precious little space is devoted to eliciting what King Solomon called "prayer from the depths"—the stirrings of individual souls striving in unison toward the divine.

McFarland



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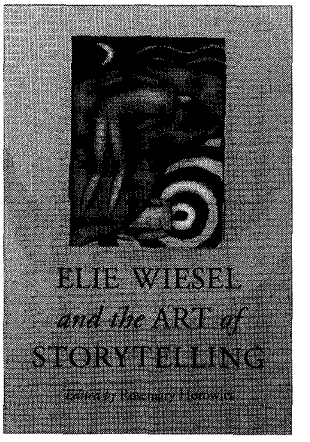

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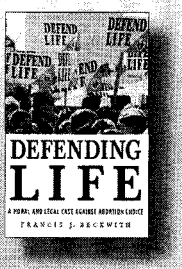

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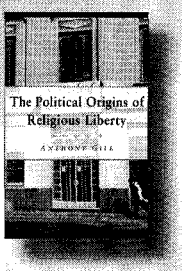

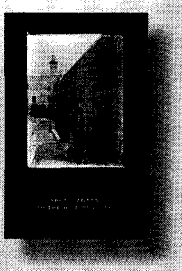

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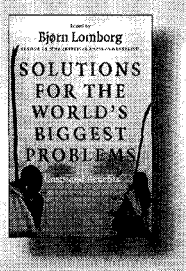

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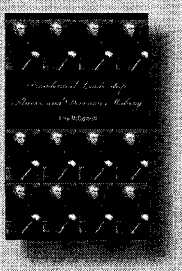

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Cold Facts

Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming

By Bjorn Lomborg

Knopf. 272 pp. $21.00

Reviewed by
Jonathan Kay

AMONG ITS fevered champions, the campaign against global warming has come to resemble a religious crusade. Militant activists present the fate of a warming world as a sort of secular "end of days," and cast their own efforts in correspondingly messianic terms. Al Gore, declaring that he is fighting to ensure "the survival of our civilization and the habitability of the Earth," congratulates himself and his followers on the "compelling moral purpose" of their "generational mission." As for the heretics who oppose this new religion, woe be unto them. The top scientist at the UN's International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has likened some critics of the Kyoto Protocol, the main international agreement for limiting greenhouse-gas emissions, to Adolf Hitler.

The Danish social scientist Bjorn Lomborg believes that such shrill rhetoric and emotionalism have made it impossible to have any kind of sensible dialogue about the issue. In *Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming*, he attempts to bring the debate back to the cost-benefit analysis typically used to tackle environmental problems. Applying the calm utilitarian approach that was the hallmark of his groundbreaking 2001 book, *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, Lomborg systematically catalogues the economic and humanitarian risks of global warming,

JONATHAN KAY *is managing editor for comment at Canada's* National Post.

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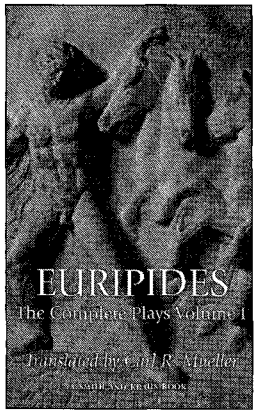

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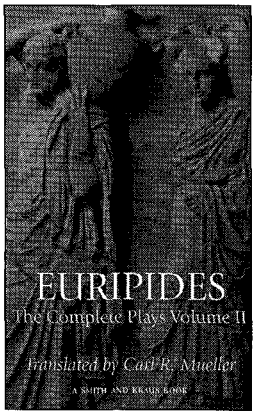

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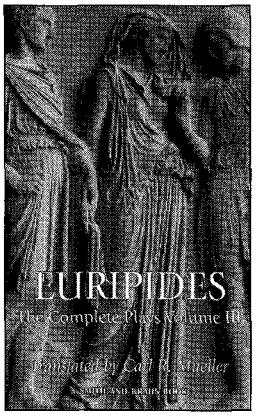

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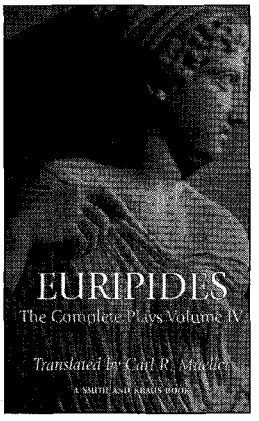

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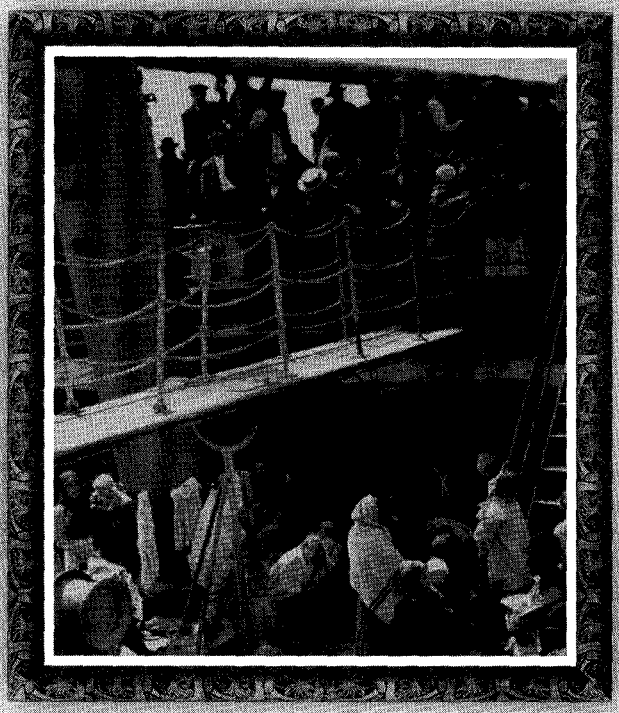

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and then sets them against the costs of carbon abatement. Global warming, he concedes, is a real and serious problem; but, he asks heretically, might there not be better ways to spend the trillions of dollars being earmarked to fight it?

THE CENTRAL premise of *Cool It* is that keeping the earth's temperature from rising should not be regarded as an end in itself, but rather as a means toward bettering humanity's lot. Chapter by chapter, Lomborg evaluates the available options for tackling climate change—from doing nothing, to instituting the restrictions called for by Kyoto, to cutting greenhouse-gas emissions in the industrialized countries by 96 percent over the next quarter-century (as in one British proposal).

A professional contrarian, Lomborg delights in showing all the ways in which the available scientific data contradict received political wisdom. He demonstrates, for instance, that in most parts of the world, the number of deaths attributable to the effects of excessively hot weather is typically an order of magnitude *lower* than that for excessively cold weather. In Athens, about 7,900 people die each year from cold, compared to only about 1,400 who die from heat. In Europe as a whole, the figures are 1.5 million versus 200,000. Overall, experts predict that by 2050 a warmer planet will *save* a total of 1.4 million lives a year.

As Lomborg emphasizes, this does not mean that higher temperatures will provide a net benefit to the world. Poorer, hotter regions such as South Asia and Africa will suffer greater hardships from rising sea levels, crop failures, epidemics, and extreme weather events. But very little of this damage, Lomborg shows, can be abated through the measures now being considered.

Reducing the emission of greenhouse gases turns out to be a spectacularly expensive enterprise, even when done in moderation. The global compliance costs of Kyoto

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alone amount to about $180 billion a year. Yet, according to the best available projections, these enormous sums would delay the globe's expected rate of heating over the next century by just 5 percent. Assuming that Kyoto is allowed to expire in 2012, its total effect will have been to delay the pace of global warming by an estimated *one week*.

In making his case, Lomborg relies on the rich body of peer-reviewed studies that have attempted to assess the likely overall effects of climate change by measuring its impact on farming, forestry, fisheries, water availability, human infrastructure, natural disasters, land erosion, pollution, and human migration. His bottom line is that, if Kyoto were to be fully implemented by all its signatories—including the United States—the environmental benefits accruing to the world over the next century would amount in dollar terms to slightly less than $2 trillion. As against this, the cost of implementing the agreement, even assuming that governments employed the most efficient carbon-limiting measures available, would be more than $5 trillion.

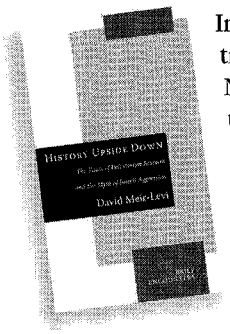
In other words, fighting climate change according to the requirements of Kyoto would earn the world about 34 cents on the dollar. An even more ambitious carbon-abatement plan now being floated by the European Union makes even less economic sense, offering to deliver just 13 cents on the dollar.

Some advocates argue that, notwithstanding such low rates of return, Kyoto is a morally necessary means to protect the developing world from the effects of the West's accumulated carbon-dioxide emissions. As Lomborg demonstrates, however, much more relief could be provided to poorer nations if even a small fraction of the trillions that would be spent on Kyoto were redirected toward alleviating more pressing problems.

As the organizer of the Copen-

History Upside Down
The Roots of Palestinian Fascism and the Myth of Israeli Aggression

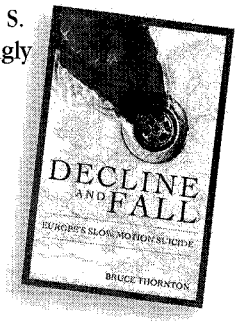
By David Meir-Levi | ISBN: 978-1-59403-192-2 | $20.00



In *History Upside Down,* historian David Meir-Levi traces the ideological DNA behind Palestinian Nationalism and explodes the cornerstone myths that this movement created — myths that justify decades of unremitting terror, genocidal ambitions and odious Jew-hatred under the cover of politically correct anti-Zionism. *History Upside Down* is a counterattack against the dangerous "alternative histories" that have effectively named Israel as the worst of the Western occupiers of the Third World.

Decline and Fall
Europe's Slow Motion Suicide

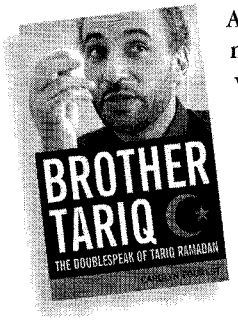
By Bruce S. Thornton | ISBN: 978-1-59403-206-6 | $21.95



In this penetrating and provocative book, Bruce S. Thornton shows that Europeans today increasingly resemble the Eloi of H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine:* sophisticated enjoyers of la dolce vita waiting to be devoured by the bestial Morlocks. Indeed, an addiction to expensive welfare entitlements, a dwindling native birth-rate and, most important, a chronically underemployed yet demographically prolific Islamic immigrant population all raise the question of how long the European good life can be sustained.

Brother Tariq
The Doublespeak of Tariq Ramadan

By Carolyn Fourest | ISBN: 978-1-59403-215-8 | $23.95



A regular feature in major English-speaking news-papers and Europe's most circulated writer on Islam, Swiss-born Muslim activist Tariq Ramadan is a global phenomenon. But in this explosive portrait, Carolyn Fourest exposes Ramadan's clever doublespeak as a "Trojan horse" that amicably woos Western ears while sowing the anti-Semitic and anti-Western values of Islamism in Muslim audiences.

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hagen Consensus (a global think tank that assigns priorities to the world's health emergencies), Lomborg has developed an expertise in the economics of foreign aid. In 2004, the group ranked the world's health problems according to how much humanitarian benefit could be achieved per dollar invested in fighting them. The Kyoto Protocol appeared near the bottom of the list, trailing far behind HIV/AIDS prevention, the provision of micro-nutrients, trade liberalization, malaria control, water purification, and basic local health services.

In the case of AIDS, each dollar spent on prevention programs yields about $40 worth of social good in the form of saved lives and less societal disruption. In the case of malaria, whose spread is often cited prominently as a by-product of global warming, the implementation of Kyoto would prevent an estimated 140,000 people from being killed by the disease in coming decades, while for a tiny fraction of the overall cost of Kyoto the West could save 85 *million* lives with straightforward anti-malarial measures. That is, the same money that, invested in Kyoto, would save one life from malaria could save 36,000 lives if invested in medication, mosquito netting, and the like. Lomborg makes similar arguments with respect to starvation, land erosion, hurricane protection, and even the much-touted threat to the world's polar bears.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, most environmentalists have little use for Lomborg's analysis. According to George Monbiot, a left-wing British activist who writes a weekly column for the *Guardian* (and who proposed the 96-percent reduction in emissions mentioned above), an insistence on comparing costs and benefits is the mark of one who has "spent too much time with [his] calculator and not enough with human beings." To which Lomborg replies: "If this approach means you end up helping five thousand Ethiopians each time Monbiot helps one, it certainly seems like you care more about humans, too."

Cool It is a book that should be read by citizens and politicians alike. At a time when exacting cost-benefit analysis is used to evaluate even the smallest capital project in the private or public sector, it is extraordinary that decision-making on climate-change policies, which could cost trillions of dollars over the course of generations, seems to be guided by little more than emotion, slogans, vacuous appeals to "the will of the international community," and a quasi-religious desire to embark on a "generational mission."

Global warming is a complex problem with potentially dramatic consequences, not all of which are within man's power to control. But, as Lomborg argues, this does not mean we should discard our rational faculties in dealing with it. If we treat climate change as something more mystical than it is, we will waste money and lives alike. Environmentalists may distrust Lomborg for turning their crusade into an accounting exercise, but when the stakes are so high, numbers are a far better guide than blind faith.

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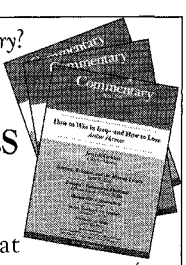

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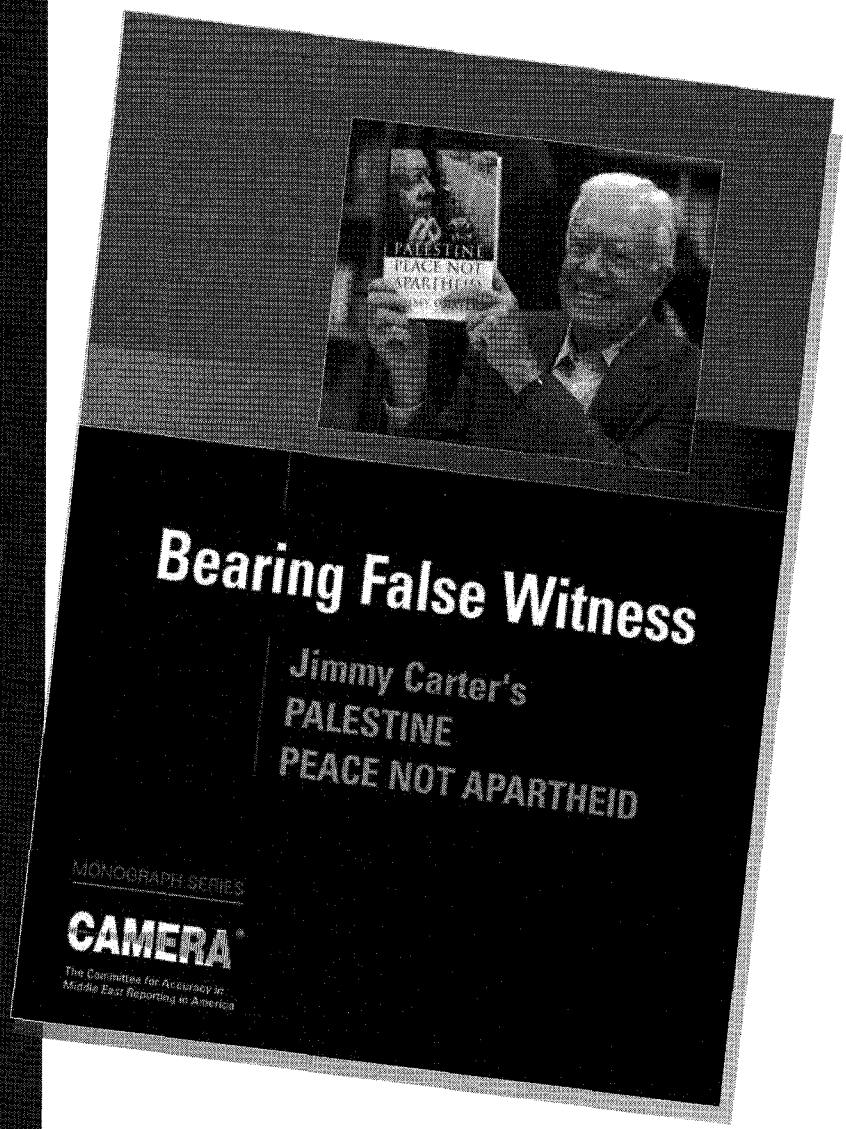

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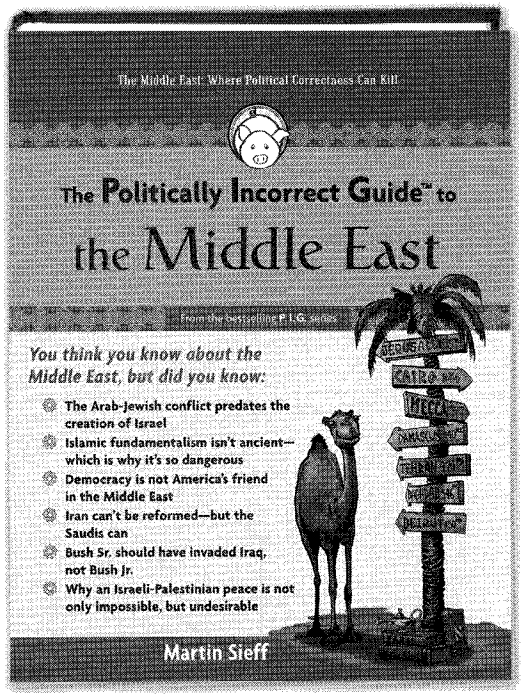
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Godly Republic: A Centrist Blueprint for America's Faith-Based Future

by John J. DiIulio, Jr.

University of California. 326 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Yuval Levin

IN A REPUBLICAN primary debate in December 1999, the six GOP candidates for President were asked to state their favorite political philosopher. Orrin Hatch named Abraham Lincoln. Steve Forbes chose John Locke. George W. Bush answered: "Christ, because he changed my heart."

Bush's reply, an instance of his tendency to refer to his Christian faith, made waves on both sides of the American debate over church and state, as secularists hyperventilated about a coming theocracy and Christian conservatives hailed the prospect of a counteroffensive in the culture wars. Once Bush was elected and assumed office, both the fears and the hopes were heightened further by one of his signature policy proposals: the creation of a White House office of "faith-based and community initiatives."

The purpose of the new office was to make sure that public funds would be channeled to charitable agencies aiding the poor and needy even if the agencies in question were affiliated with religious organizations, provided that taxpayer funds never backed expressly religious purposes. "Government, of course, cannot fund, and will not fund, religious activities," Bush said in launching the program in 2001, "but when people of faith provide social services, we will not discriminate against them."

John DiIulio, a political scientist

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THE HERMENEUTICS OF MEDIEVAL JEWISH THOUGHT
Understanding the Linguistic Codes of Rashi and Nachmanides

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Kneseth Israel Synagogue

Preface by David B. Levy
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at the University of Pennsylvania who had long promoted this approach, was a natural choice to head the new office. A socially conservative Democrat, DiIulio was also a consummate centrist, with, it was felt, some chance of diffusing the passions surrounding the effort. Although his brief service in the White House—less than nine months in 2001—did give shape to the faith-based initiative, it also taught DiIulio many cautionary lessons about church, state, and contemporary politics.

Godly Republic presents DiIulio's reflections on his experience, and on the outlook for future cooperation between government and faith-based charities. The book is not a memoir, and DiIulio has very few insider stories to tell about his time in the White House. It is, rather, an impassioned plea for a truce in the church-state wars and, as the book's subtitle puts it, "a centrist blueprint for America's faith-based future."

ACCORDING TO DiIulio, the heated debate over religion and government in America has been fought between two narrow extremes that do not represent the country's political traditions, legal realities, or national sentiments. From the first, he writes, the nation's founders agreed "that America should be neither a secular state nor a Christian nation," but instead should rise into "a great and godly republic" in which religion would play a crucial role in civic life but would be neither enshrined nor constrained by the federal government.

It was this middle ground that in turn came to be protected by the Supreme Court's jurisprudence. DiIulio offers a forceful defense of the Court's neutrality doctrine, with its distinction between government support of religious groups engaged in civic enterprises and government support of religion per se. The American public, he argues, embraces this same middle ground. "Neither strict secularists nor religious purists represent what we the people love most about our godly republic."

Having devoted roughly half his book to making the case for this middle ground, DiIulio contends that it is best represented by local faith-based programs, supported by government, that aid the poorest of the poor. In keeping with the relevant laws and judicial decisions, a funded program must have a secular purpose (like providing social services); its primary effect must neither advance nor inhibit religion; and it must not foster "an excessive government entanglement with religion."

Thus, funded social-service programs can do their work in a church, but that work cannot involve proselytizing or provide incentives for conversion or religious practice. They must offer aid to all who need it, regardless of religious affiliation. And they must make jobs available not only to members of the church or its denomination but to any qualified candidate.

These, in DiIulio's judgment, are sound distinctions. Although in practice they have led to some absurdities—for instance, the Court has ruled that state governments can pay for books used in Catholic schools but not for maps—for the most part, he maintains, they have also permitted constructive cooperation within common-sense bounds.

WHY, THEN, has there been so much controversy about these rules? And why has their implementation, as DiIulio describes it, been both sluggish and dismally ineffective?

He blames two warring camps in Washington. On the one hand, strict church-state separationists have long prevented perfectly legitimate cooperation between government and religious groups, arguing that any such relationship is dangerous and impermissible. On the other hand, overly zealous Christian evangelists have given the public the wrong idea about what should and what should not be involved in such cooperation. In 2001, for example, congressional Republicans tried to pass legislation that would have explicitly permitted religion-based hiring in faith-based programs, and would have significantly loosened the protections against federally funded proselytizing. The effort nearly strangled Bush's initiative in its cradle.

What is needed for constitutional church-state cooperation to become a reality is a truly middle-ground approach. DiIulio acknowledges that clear data on the relative effectiveness of faith-based social services are very hard to come by. What we do know, however, is that the institutions most often willing to enter the most dangerous inner-city neighborhoods and to ease the pain and burdens of the desperately needy are churches and other religious bodies, particularly in the black community. There is, he insists, nothing un-American or unconstitutional about government's coming to the aid of those groups when it can, and there is something callous about refusing to do so.

THROUGHOUT this book, DiIulio writes with a unique blend of street sense, good humor, social-science discipline, and humanitarian appeal. In a no-nonsense style backed by academic empiricism, he unmistakably conveys just how profoundly impressed he has been by the efforts of pastors and church volunteers in city after city, and the reader cannot help coming away similarly impressed.

But precisely because of its empirical and middling approach, *Godly Republic* can at times feel like an endless string of caveats. DiIulio begins each chapter with two "myths"—generally one myth propounded by strict secularists and another by religious purists—plus a "fact" that comes down squarely and moderately between them. At the end of every train of thought is another call for moderation: moderation in our view of religion and government,

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Jerusalem (1)

Whose city - whose "holy city" - is it?

It is forty years since Israel's victory in the Six-Day War in 1967 that the city of Jerusalem, which had been divided for nineteen years has been reunited under Israeli rule. But there is still much talk that the "Middle East problem" cannot be solved unless the city, or at the very least its eastern part, be "returned to its rightful owners," the Muslim Arabs. In fact, this claim for Jerusalem, together with the "return" of the 1948 refugees, whose descendants have miraculously swollen to 5 million, are posited as "non-negotiable demands" in discussions with the Arabs.

What are the facts?

A city of many nationalities. Before the end of the 1967 Six-Day War, during which the Israeli Defense Forces re-conquered Jerusalem from the Jordanians, claims to Jerusalem being a Muslim holy city were rarely, if ever, asserted. Jerusalem had always been a city in which many religions and nationalities lived side by side. It was only after the old city was back in Jewish hands that the Muslim Arabs declared their desire to wage "jihad" (holy war) to bring the city back into Arab possession.

The notion to call Jerusalem an Islamic holy city has only come about in modern times, especially after the Arabs lost the city to Israel in the Six-Day War. It now has gained currency by dint of constant repetition. The basis for the claim is that Jerusalem does indeed contain an Islamic holy site, namely the Temple Mount (sacred to both Muslims and Jews) with its two mosques, El Aksa and the Dome of the Rock. It is the place from which Mohammed, who had never set foot in the city, is believed to have ascended to heaven. But aware that it was the holy city of Christians and Jews, and wishing to convert them to his new religion, he commanded his followers to build a mosque in Jerusalem. But never in Muslim history did this mosque or this city compare in significance to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina – cities that no "infidel" may visit.

A tenuous Muslim claim. It is on the basis of this religious tradition that the Muslims designated the entire Jewish Temple Mount to be their holy site. The Israeli government, in its constant spirit of accommodation to Muslim sensibilities, has largely acceded to this tradition and has put the area in and around the two mosques entirely under Muslim control. But how would Christians feel if, instead of from the Temple Mount, Muslim tradition had Mohammed ascend from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and if the Muslim Arabs were to claim that site as their property? The Christian world, often ready to consent to Muslim claims against Jews and Israelis, would be greatly astonished and would certainly resist such claim. But Muslim Arab assertiveness doesn't end there. On the tenuous claim of their right to the Temple Mount, they have construed a claim to the entire city of Jerusalem (or at the very least to its eastern part), which they have declared to be their "third holiest city." And, it would be an insult to all Muslims and all Arabs to leave the city in the hands of the "infidel Jews."

> "Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning and of Jewish thinking for over 3,000 years. That is the reason that the State of Israel has rededicated the Jewish holy city to be its indivisible capital."

Jerusalem: Never an Arab capital. But the city of Jerusalem – in contrast to Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus – has never played any major role in the political and religious lives of the Muslim Arabs. It was never a political center, never a national or even a provincial or sub-provincial capital of any country, since Biblical times. It was the site of one Muslim holy place, but otherwise a backwater to the Arabs. The passion for Jerusalem was not discovered by the Muslim Arabs until most recent history.

At the center of Jewish life. But Jerusalem has stood at the center of the Jewish people's national life since King David made it his capital in 1003 BCE. After the return from Babylonian exile, Jerusalem again served as the capital of the Jewish people for the next five-and-a-half centuries.

Jews are not the usurpers in Jerusalem. They have been living there since the Biblical era and have been the majority population since the 19th century. Jews have synagogues and other holy sites in most cities of the world. But do they claim sovereignty over those cities because of it? Of course not! It would be preposterous and people wouldn't accept it. And the Muslim Arab claim to Jerusalem, based on the mosques on the Temple Mount, is just as untenable. Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning and of Jewish thinking for over 3,000 years. That is the reason that the State of Israel has rededicated the Jewish holy city to be its indivisible capital.

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moderation in our expectations for publicly supported faith-based aid, moderation in our hopes for changing the culture of poverty. DiIulio even wants to moderate our estimate of the significance of religion in public life altogether, asserting that "scholars and pundits who once ignored religion are now exaggerating its political importance."

All of this seeming temporizing gives the book a flavor of defeatism. In describing his own efforts to establish a middle ground for faith-based aid, DiIulio acknowledges frankly that they have come to little. "Between 1996 and 2006," he writes, "neither the Clinton administration nor the Bush administration had done much to forge partnerships with faith-based groups that measurably helped people in need." As for the future, he calls essentially for more of the same. We can do better, he says, but not by much. Nor does his case for doing better differ from the one he made before his tenure as director of Bush's faith-based office.

Indeed, *Godly Republic* shows little sign of having been shaped by DiIulio's experience in Washington. Oddly, he brushes past a number of clearly interesting stories about the administration's initiative, and mentions only in passing that after leaving the White House he published and then withdrew a scathing denunciation of some top Bush officials (calling them, among other things, "Mayberry Machiavellis"). Just as he leaves open every question about that peculiar incident, so he writes as though there were little to learn from his efforts to put into practice the ideas he lays out in this book.

NEVERTHELESS, the impression of defeatism does not last. Proceeding through this book, one eventually grasps the truly unfamiliar character of DiIulio's case. When it comes to aiding the poor, he really *is* a moderate—i.e., one who does not believe there is a way radically to transform the way we think about the poor, let alone poverty itself, but who does believe that a long-running shouting match over the First Amendment should not be allowed to prevent resources from flowing to cash-strapped volunteers who are helping needy people one by one.

Usually, when politicians propose a "third way," they speak in terms of breaking the grip of Right and Left in order to unleash a torrent of populist common sense that will wash America clean. This is the radical centrism of Ross Perot, or in smaller doses of John McCain or Barack Obama—or of President Bush's rhetoric in speaking of his faith-based agenda. DiIulio's centrism is not of this stripe; his aims and expectations are as moderate as his tone and his convictions. In the end, *Godly Republic* is a simple and decent plea for a simple and decent end. That is what makes DiIulio's brand of centrism truly unusual in our politics; it may also be why his efforts in Washington failed to bear fruit.

The Good Fight

Surrender Is Not An Option: Defending America at the United Nations and Abroad

by John Bolton

Simon & Schuster. 485 pp. $27.00

Reviewed by
Gabriel Schoenfeld

A "TERRIBLE choice at a critical time" were the words of dispraise offered by the *New York Times* when President Bush nominated John Bolton to be his ambassador to the United Nations in March 2005. One does not have to have shared that view to observe that the relentlessly conservative diplomat, a disciple of Barry Goldwater in his youth, much later of counsel to Senator Jesse Helms, has set off more than a few explosions in the minefields of Washington over the course of his career. Nor does one have to share the *Times*'s view to pick up Bolton's memoir with trepidation.

The volume, with its belligerent title, *Surrender Is Not An Option*, flashing in embossed gold letters on a crimson dust jacket with a photo of its author draped in American flags as he addresses something called the Annual Conservative Political Action Conference, virtually screeches Hard Right. The package seems to suggest that a tirade might be coming between its covers.

Does it?

THE NARRATIVE begins with a compelling reconstruction of humble origins surmounted, or not so much surmounted as converted into character. The son of first-generation Scots-Irish immigrants, Bolton grew up in the 1950's in a working-class neighborhood in Baltimore. His mother, a housewife, and his father, a firefighter, pushed him hard and he excelled, proceeding from a competitive Baltimore grade school and on to the Ivy League.

A fixed "libertarian conservative" by the time he arrived on the Yale campus in the fall of 1966, Bolton had little sympathy for the "flavor of the day" political strikes that began to sweep the university by his senior year. He

> especially resented the sons and daughters of the wealthy, of whom there were many, telling me that I was supposed to, in effect, forfeit my scholarship. I had an education to get, and the protesters could damn well get out of my way as I walked to class.

An education Bolton did indeed get, and not only at Yale, where he graduated summa cum laude and

GABRIEL SCHOENFELD, *senior editor of* COMMENTARY, *operates and writes daily for* Connecting the Dots *at connectingthedots.us.com.*

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won a prize for the year's best undergraduate essay in international relations, but also at Yale law school. Learning of a different sort continued in Washington, D.C., where, between stints in private practice, he occupied a series of progressively more challenging governmental slots.

By 1985, Bolton found himself in the Reagan Justice Department, where he was tasked with shepherding Supreme Court nominees through their confirmation hearings. He achieved a triumph with William Rehnquist (for the job of Chief Justice), another with Antonin Scalia, and a disastrous rout with Robert Bork. From there, after George Bush 41 defeated Michael Dukakis in 1988, Bolton went on to become an assistant secretary of state under James Baker, with responsibility for international organizations.

Great events were unfolding in those years. Bolton offers a tour of the momentous issues with which he had to grapple, from the collapse of the USSR to the diplomacy leading up to Desert Storm to the campaign to repeal the UN's infamous 1975 "Zionism is racism" resolution. This last undertaking, internally championed first by Bolton at his own initiative, was not, despite the obvious merits, an easy call.

At question was whether the U.S. might accomplish something that had become that rarest of rare things: a majority vote in the General Assembly on the American side. The Israelis were worried that a defeat would do more damage than simply leaving the resolution to molder on the shelves. Neither Baker nor Bush, absorbed in the effort to isolate Saddam Hussein, was initially enthusiastic. But they came around, and the campaign went forward: "We 'demarched,' the fancy diplomatic word for lobbying in foreign capitals, we pressed hard in New York, and we called in ambassadors in Washington. Bush and Baker were both 'mad dialers' by this time, as was I. Persistence paid off." The resolution was repealed on December 16, 1991.

Following an eight-year hiatus from government service during the Clinton administration, Bolton returned, following George W. Bush's election, as undersecretary of state to Colin Powell. In this higher position, where he held the arms-control and international-security portfolio, things were to become yet more interesting as even greater events came crashing all around.

In the aftermath of September 11, the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, always a flawed agreement, had become an intolerable impediment to American self-defense: "Our intelligence had missed the preparations for this devastating attack [of 9/11], and there was no telling what else they were missing." Developing the capacity to fend off a surprise missile attack, a project launched by Reagan in 1983, was now in Bolton's eyes an urgent necessity. His assignment was to smooth the way out of the treaty and placate some very unhappy Russian officials, a process recounted here, meeting by meeting, in absorbing detail.

Nuclear proliferation was another assignment, with North Korea high on the list of dangerous offenders. Here the battle Bolton reconstructs was not only with the North Koreans but also with the "permanent bureaucracy" at State, which wanted to continue "to do exactly what it had been doing in the last years of the Clinton administration, and what it had tried unsuccessfully to do in Bush's first two years"—namely, persuade the North to relinquish its nuclear-weapons program by means of jaw-jaw.

Bolton was pushing for a more forceful, and also more practical, approach, which came in the form of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Together with a core group of allies, the U.S. embarked on a policy aimed at physically interdicting shipments of weapons of mass destruction on the high seas. The first test case—that of the *So San*, a Cambodian-registered vessel making its way from North Korea toward Yemen—came in November 2002.

With Spanish naval forces demanding an inspection, the *So San*'s captain responded that the cargo in his hold was cement. But beneath bags of that commodity a consignment of Scud missiles was found. Though the Spaniards possessed the authority under international law to seize the weapons on their own, the U.S. State Department, whose high-level officials had been kept from their desks that day by an ice storm, was in unusually acute disarray: "fear from the lawyers . . . caused panic," writes Bolton, and the *So San* was permitted to proceed.

If the first test of the PSI ended in failure, subsequent interdictions of ships carrying illicit cargo were far more successful, yielding, in one instance, a North Korean transport of hundreds of barrels of a precursor chemical for the manufacture of VX nerve gas, and in another even more crucial instance, centrifuge equipment labeled as "used auto parts" bound for Libya. The latter seizure set in motion the chain of events that led to the closure of A.Q. Khan's nuclear yard sale in Pakistan and Libya's renunciation of its WMD program, whose components it turned over to the United States.

But policy toward Pyongyang was not the only cause of bureaucratic strife within the department. Even more intense battles were to erupt as Bolton's relations with his boss, Colin Powell, turned "seriously bad." The proximate cause of the falling-out was differences over how best to constrain Iran's nuclear ambitions, with Bolton pushing for a policy composed of more sticks and Powell pushing for a policy composed, in his own words, "mostly of carrots."

This internal rift within the administration, retold here blow by

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blow, was to remain unresolved when the 2004 elections intervened. In the ensuing shuffle, Powell stepped down and Bush promoted Bolton to the ambassadorship at Turtle Bay, where his term was limited by a now-Democratic controlled Senate that refused to confirm him.

Bolton's primary focus in his year in New York was reforming the world body, a longstanding imperative made even more pressing by the billion-dollar corruption scandal attending the UN's Oil-for-Food program in Iraq. But as Bolton found, it would take more than an irresistible force to budge an object as immovable as the UN bureaucracy. "Sisyphus in the Twilight Zone" is Bolton's description of endless meetings to review discussion-documents written in UNspeak. The title of another Bolton chapter here—"Why Do I Want This Job?"—is apt, given the few satisfactions, apart from a suite in the Waldorf Astoria, that his relatively brief stint as UN ambassador entailed.

WHAT THEN are we to make of John Bolton, and of his memoir? To take the second question first, anyone expecting a tirade will be happily disappointed. Having intermittently occupied a series of mid- to high-level posts in the diplomatic machinery of the U.S. government over more than two decades, Bolton is a meticulous observer of what he saw and heard and did. The result is a volume that is not just the story of one man's career but a remarkably informative account of how our government works to formulate and execute foreign policy.

Thus, anyone seeking to understand bureaucratic warfare—the battles that go on among agencies, the battles between temporary political appointees and tenured Foreign Service officers, the production of diplomatic cables, talking points, demarches, and every other non-military instrument at the disposal of the U.S. government—will find this an indispensable inside account of how sausage, not always Grade A, is made at the Department of State. My one complaint on this score pertains to the endless array of acronyms that dot these pages—from UNMEE to G-77/Nam to JUSCANZ. These can induce fatigue even in a close student of international affairs, and the absence of a glossary to help sort things out is a crime worthy of an INTERPOL probe.

Altogether, Bolton comes across here as a figure strikingly different from the reckless, unilateralist, right-wing ideologue conjured up by the *New York Times* and others on the Left. Though in private practice he may have represented the reelection campaign of Jesse Helms, his patron if not his hero is none other than James Baker, the ultimate realist-pragmatist, a man whose political instincts, according to Bolton, were usually correct, and who sought to "maximize the yield in any given battle, rather than just opining about it, however satisfying opining might be."

Bolton also comes across, surprisingly, as a stalwart champion of multilateralism and the very international organizations he is accused by his critics of wanting to wreck. But he is a defender of a particular kind of multilateralism and a particular kind of international organization. The campaign he led to repeal the shameful UN resolution equating Zionism with racism illustrates the point.

The General Assembly's action in 1975, Bolton explains, was an attempt to delegitimize Israel. But, along the way, "it had instead delegitimized the UN," especially in the minds of many Americans who became convinced, correctly, "that the UN was the hopeless captive of Soviet manipulation and third-world radicalism." If the UN was to have a legitimate place in the American quest for a tranquil world order, freeing it from such captivity was an essential step.

Indeed, the nature of multilateralism itself had become perilously misconceived by the State Department bureaucracy. Addressing burning issues, like North Korea's nuclear weapons, via endless discussions at hexagonal tables leading nowhere at the pace of coagulating molasses is not the only course open to us. The Proliferation Security Initiative that yielded such impressive results was the work of an ad-hoc alliance that included not only such friendly democracies as Japan, Spain, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, but also, strikingly, Russia. This is a precedent rich with possibility for future American foreign policy.

If Bolton's appointment to the United Nations was a "terrible choice at a critical time," as the *Times* had it, one can only hope that more such terrible choices lie ahead, and that additional chapters, perhaps with titles like "Sisyphus in the CIA" or "Sisyphus in the Pentagon" or even "Sisyphus in the Oval Office," will one day appear in *Surrender Is Not An Option: Volume II.*

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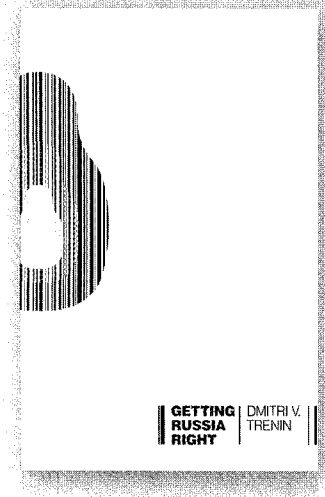

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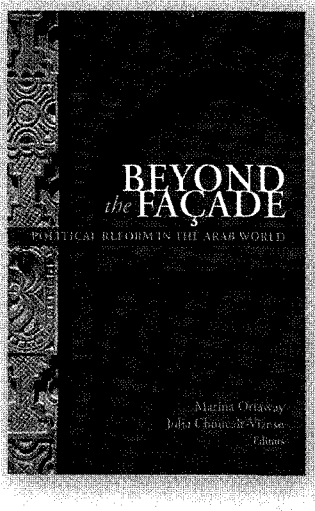

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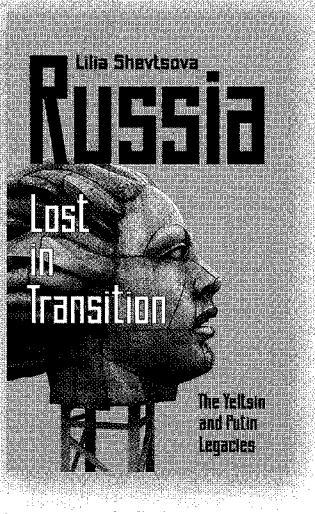

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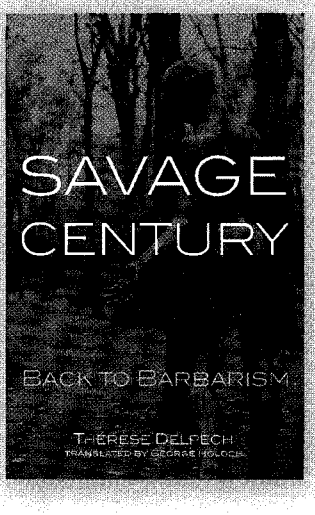

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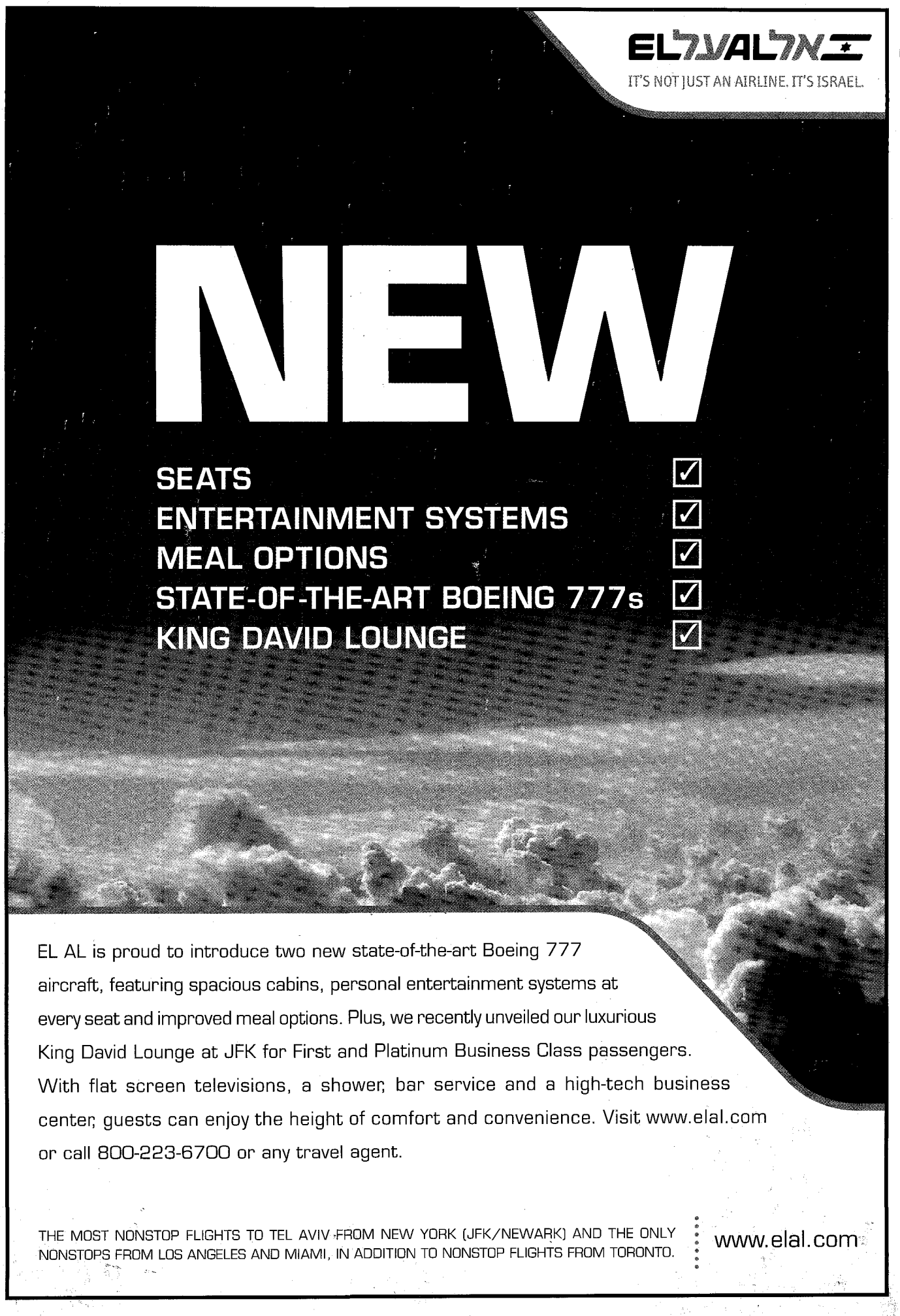
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